

# CUSTOMS THE JOURNAL

EST. 1904

OFFICIAL JOURNAL CUSTOMS & EXCISE

## PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION

VOL. 40, No. 973

OCTOBER, 1943

MONTHLY

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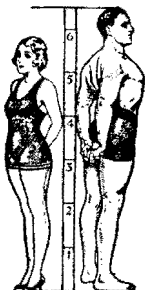
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## PREVENTIVE STAFF ASSOCIATION

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CORRESPONDENCE, LITERARY MATTER, ETC.—*Letters to the Editor, and articles and correspondence intended for publication should be addressed to the Editor, "The Customs Journal," H.M. Customs and Excise, 5, Odessa Street, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.16. It is essential that all matter for insertion in the monthly issue should reach the Editor on or before the 10th of the month of publication. Articles submitted need not be typewritten, but the use of one side of the paper renders a great assistance.*

BACK NUMBERS.—*May be obtained by applying to the Association Offices, 2d. per copy (post free).*

SUBSCRIPTIONS.—*Retired Officers and outside persons wishing to become subscribers may do so on application to the Organising Secretary, 6, Brook Lane, Bexley, Kent. The charge is 3s. 0d. per annum, post free.*

## CIVIL SERVICE WAR DISTRESS FUND

The Committee of Management has decided to extend the scope of the Fund to cover all temporary Civil Servants who are released for service in the Armed Forces, Civil Defence or work of national importance. Hitherto the Fund has been limited to temporary Civil Servants with the six months' unbroken pre-war service which entitles them to balance of civil pay.

Most Departments do not keep records of temporary Civil Servants without the six months' unbroken pre-war service who leave their service, and consequently the Fund must rely on personal applications by such former temporary staff or their dependants.

All temporary Civil Servants released from Departments in the manner described above should therefore note that, if in distress as the result of the war, they or their dependants should apply for assistance direct to the Secretary to the Fund at the Ministry of War Transport, Berkeley Square House, Berkeley Square, London, W.1.

Former temporary Civil Servants can continue to subscribe to the Fund by sending their contributions direct to the Secretary at the above address.

The Committee of Management has also decided to send parcels to Civil Servants, permanent and temporary, who are prisoners of war, and Departments have been asked to notify the names of any of their staff concerned direct to the Fund headquarters. In the case of former temporary Civil Servants where Departments have no records, however, their dependants or next-of-kin should be advised to notify the Secretary to the Fund.

## OBITUARY

Mr. A. G. P. STEPHENS, P.O.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. A. G. P. Stephens, P.O., in Glasgow, on 23rd September last. Mr. Stephens, who came to Glasgow on detached duty from Dover, suffered from asthma contracted as a result of service in the last war, and the arduous nature of the work in Glasgow, combined with unsuitable climatic conditions, did much to hasten his end. His affable and uncomplaining nature and efficiency while on duty gained him the respect and esteem of the entire Glasgow staff, who regret deeply the loss of a colleague whose sojourn in the port was marked by qualities of courage and good humour, which overcame a physical handicap of the most distressing kind. Mr. Stephens is survived by his wife and five children, to whom the sincere sympathy of the Glasgow Preventive Staff is extended in their bereavement.

## CHANGES IN THE STAFF

to 11th October, 1943.

TRANSFERS.

PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—  
White, H. C., Dover to Cardiff.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—  
Stanford, F. M., Newport to Liverpool.

OFFICERS LEAVING THE SERVICE.

RETIREMENT.

CHIEF PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—  
Howard, P. W., Hull.

RESIGNATION.

ASSISTANT PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—  
Tohill, J., Belfast.

DEATH.

PREVENTIVE OFFICER:—  
Stephens, A. G. P., Dover.

OBITUARY OF SUPERANNUATED OFFICER.  
Bardo, W. J. J., Preventive Officer.

## Publicity Section

Below is a copy of a letter sent to the Editor of the *Monthly Review*, the organ of the Customs and Excise Section of the C.S.C.A.:—

Dear Sir,

Your August/September number contained a remark about the Preventive Staff Association which is rather typical of the remarks made by the larger Civil Service unions which, when studying a small union like ours, combine doubt of the ability of such small bodies to do anything useful for the members, with criticism of the successes obtained for the membership which the larger bodies cannot, through their very size, obtain for theirs. You are speaking to "Mrs. Clericoff," whose husband, like hundreds of the Waterguard's officers, is on active service and who is, quite rightly (considering, if nothing else, the immense problem your large number of temps will provide in post-war times), concerned about the future of his job, and you say you could show her "a picture of the Preventive Staff Association sitting on the fence waiting to hop down into the field offering the most corn."

Now I have taken rather a fancy to Mrs. Clericoff, despite her rather alien name, and I should not like her to be deceived. So I wish, through you, to tell her that the P.S.A. are not sitting on a fence, in the matter of post-war reconstruction, but that we were working, and had had schemes, on this subject before the Surveyors took their unilateral action when you, with us, thought the continuance of joint staff consultation would be preferable. Our scheme, at present, is the property of our members, but I can tell her, and you, that it is designed merely to alter the structure of the Preventive Service and the scope, internally, of the Waterguard (a detail is an alteration of this title, obviously out of date in these air-minded times), and we do not intend, in any way, to encroach on the work of other sections of this department or of the C.S. generally. Our future, we see, is as specialists in a particular form of work—we even consistently advocate the performance of all routine clerical work in the Preventive Service by the grades proper to that work—and we are thus not concerned with other fields and the corn falling therein. Indeed, the major alterations in our scheme concerned improved recruiting and training, and you clerical officers will, I am sure, be with us there. Nor do we want any system of periodical withdrawal of our best officers into other sections of the department by methods other than examinations.

Mrs. Clericoff, then, and Mr. Clericoff (or Lieutenant Clericoff, probably, for your Service men are doubtless proving their worth as effectively as ours under arms) need not worry. In fact, we are out to benefit him and, further, though now I speak unofficially, I think there would even be a future for Mrs. C. in the Post-war Preventive Service.

Yours faithfully,

C. F. SHAW,  
Publicity Office, P.S.A.

## CURRENT COMMENTS

### Our Assistant Secretary.

WE are pleased to report that Mr. H. L. Boalch, who entered hospital at the beginning of the month to undergo an operation, is doing well and hopes soon to be discharged to convalescence. It will, however, be some weeks before we can expect to see him back, ready and fit for duty.

Members will join us in sending him sincere wishes for a speedy and complete recovery.

### Coupons for Uniforms.

We have now received, through the Departmental Staff Side, official intimation that the number of coupons to be surrendered annually is to be reduced from twelve to eight.

We learn also that the Board of Trade may demand that these shall be given up in advance.

Our members have already parted with twelve coupons within the past eight months, and to be called upon to surrender another eight almost immediately may well cause a temporary hardship far greater than arose under the "instalment in arrear" system. For this reason the Staff Side has asked to see the draft instructions before they are issued.

### "Pay-as-you-earn" Income Tax.

There has been considerable development under this head since we published our rather sketchy reference in the last issue.

The scheme, which was originally designed to cover only weekly paid workers, is now to be extended to apply to salaried persons up to £600. Later we learned that the Chancellor is in sympathy with its application to *all* Schedule E taxpayers. What is most important, however, is the announcement that the new system will be applied to the Civil Service "provided no unforeseen difficulties arise."

### Balance of Civil Pay.

This paragraph is, in the main, addressed to our members in H.M. Forces.

We have had occasion to intercede in questions of adjustments of overpayments of balances of civil pay due to the fact that this Department had been kept in ignorance of improvements in Service pay.

In thanking us for action taken in a recent case, our member said: "I do not know whether or not you have many such cases as mine to look into, but I should think that if such cases were publicised in the 'Journal,' they would act as good propaganda and show that one of the most useful functions of an association or trade union is the looking after members' interests, even when war deems it necessary for him to vacate the Department for some time."

We like the thought, but regret we cannot agree to do it that way. We would prefer that our members in the Forces should watch the position themselves and see that the Department is told of increases in Service emoluments and family allowances.

Incidentally, it is not often that bouquets are passed to the A. & C.G., but we certainly do appreciate the sympathetic treatment accorded to this type of case by Branch 10C.

### Alarm Clocks.

In response to a number of enquiries from members, the Association wrote to the Board of Trade requesting that Waterguard Officers on certain duties should be placed on the priority list and be granted permits for the purchase of alarm clocks.

The matter is still under consideration but, in the reply to our first letter, the Board of Trade, after asking for further details of conditions in the Department, indicated that there could be no question whatever of every member of the Association being issued with a clock: they could consider only the most urgent cases.

District Secretaries will be kept informed of developments,

### Executive Committee (P.S.A.).

The October meeting of the Executive Committee (P.S.A.) will take place at the Offices of the C. & E. Federation, Walter House, London, on the 28th of the month, commencing at 10 a.m.

### C. & E. "Orphanage" Fund.

At the meeting of the Executive Committee of the C. & E. Widows' and Orphans' Fund, held on the 4th October last, Mr. G. B. Dover, Assistant Preventive Officer, London, was elected to the post of Assistant Secretary.

Congratulations are due to Mr. Dover on his appointment, and to the Fund on securing the services of an officer of Mr. Dover's character and abilities.

### Civil Service Distress Fund.

From time to time reference is made to the good work of this Fund and to the gradually widening scope of its activities.

Recently the Committee of Management decided to send parcels to Civil Servants who are prisoners of war, and the various departments have been asked to notify the names of any of their staff concerned direct to the Fund headquarters.

This is a splendid gesture—one which was never in contemplation when the Fund was created, but one, nevertheless, which provides yet another good reason why every member should subscribe.

### Cost-of-living Index Figure.

	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.
1941/2 ...	100	100	99	100	100	100	101
1942/3 ...	99	99	98	99	98	100	99

### Corrigendum.

On page 76 in our last issue, through the printer's error, the heading, "Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council," was inadvertently retained from the lay-out of the August number. The actual heading should have been as the sub-title shows, "Report of Annual Conference, 1943," referring, of course, to the P.S.A. Conference Report.

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## Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council

Items of interest extracted from the Report of the two hundred and sixty-fifth meeting of the Council, held in the Conference Room, City Gate House, E.C.2, on Wednesday, 29th September, 1943, the Chair being taken by Sir Archibald Carter, K.C.B., K.C.I.E., Chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise.

Prior to the commencement of the business on the agenda the Council referred to the lamented death of Mr. Arthur C. Wood, O.B.E., Accountant and Comptroller-General, and expressed their sense of the loss sustained by the Department and the Council. The Secretaries were directed to convey to Mrs. Wood and her family the sympathy of the members of the Council with her in her sad bereavement.

### MAN-POWER.

- (a) **Staff Side proposal that Officers seconded to the Special Inquiry Staff be included in their respective age groupings in the Officer Grade for purposes of release to the Forces and deferment.**

In continuation of the discussion at the last Council meeting the Staff Side formally tabled a proposal as above, and said their policy was to regard all Officers as equal for purposes of enlistment or deferment. They could not agree that the nature of the work justified special reservation. As regards the period of time available for any specialised training deemed necessary for Officers seconded to the Special Inquiry Staff, the Staff Side pointed out that they had been given no hint of the intended reservation when the 10 per cent. cut had been under consideration, and that time had thus been lost which would have been available for such training had the matter become an item for discussion on the Council at an earlier date. The Staff Side further observed that the rate of call-up appeared to lend some support to the view that there was yet time to train new transferees to the Special Inquiry Staff.

The Official Side said it would be realised that there were different views as to the justification for reservation of the seconded men, and they felt unable to modify their views on the matter as expressed at earlier meetings of the Council. They would, however, be prepared to consider the point made by the Staff Side as regards training further staff in the event of the call-up being further delayed, and would communicate with the Staff Side.

The proposal was thereupon adjourned for Official Side consideration.

- (b) **Coast Preventive Men.**

The Official Side said that they were still considering the case of redundant Coast Preventive Men. Ten were being transferred to the Launch Service; fourteen had volunteered for transfer—which would be permanent—to the Coast Guard. Seventy-one (inclusive of the fourteen mentioned above) were long-service Royal Navy, etc., pensioners under 55 years of age, and they had been nominated to the Admiralty as now available for call-up.

The Staff Side noted this statement and requested to be advised of the names of the men listed for transfer to the Admiralty.

### STAFF SIDE PROPOSAL THAT BILLETING ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD NOT BE APPLIED TO THE OUT-DOOR GRADES OF THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT AT LIVERPOOL.

The Staff Side felt that no further argument was possible on this matter, and the Council thereupon recorded disagreement on the proposal.

### RETIREMENT: EFFECT ON PROMOTION OF RE-EMPLOYMENT OR DEFERMENT.

The Official Side said that the retirements policy was continuing and has been applied, since the last Council meeting, to the Controlling and Surveyor Grades and Headquarters Offices.

### AMALGAMATION OF LEITH AND EDINBURGH COLLECTIONS.

Re-adjourned at the request of the Staff Side,

### STAFF SIDE PROPOSAL THAT AN AUTONOMOUS INCOME TAX BRANCH BE SET UP IN THE CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT.

The Official Side said that representations had been made with a view to obtaining a reversion to the former practice whereby the assessment as well as the collection of Income Tax on official salaries was performed within this Department. The working of the present arrangement was being reviewed in direct consultation with the Inland Revenue, with whom discussions were proceeding. It was considered unlikely that adoption of the present proposal would follow, but it was hoped that improvements in machinery would be achieved as a result of the consultations.

The Staff Side said they would await the conclusion of the consultations, and the Council re-adjourned the proposal.

### STAFF SIDE PROPOSAL FOR REVISION OF THE ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO MEMBERS OF CLERICAL GRADES HOLDING DEPUTATIONS TO ACT AS DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENTS OF MERCANTILE MARINE.

Further informal discussion on this proposal was pending and the item was accordingly re-adjourned.

### SEIZURE REWARDS.

The disagreement from the Waterguard Sectional Committee on the Staff Side proposal "that the system of awarding automatic rewards to Preventive Officers be abolished," was adjourned *sine die*.

The Council decided to hold its next meeting on Wednesday, 27th October, 1943.

## "Sunderland Calling"

Hello, Forces!

News is once more to hand of Charlie Scarfe. He is fit and sends regards to the blokes. He has been having a spell at the Battle School, and reports getting plenty of Soccer and Rugby. All's well here. Charles. Good luck and good scouting.

The Big Boy reports all O.K., in spite of his having received some cuts and bruises, due to an argument with some of the ship's armoury. You must take more water when splicing the main brace, Big Boy, and remember guns are usually hard. Good luck. Chins up.

Bill Sutton dropped in on a spot of leave from Greenock. He is fit and well, though very much browned off, and appears to have at last settled the accommodation problem fairly satisfactorily. No news yet, Bill. Keep smiling.

Jack Crosby reports fit and well. Says life in the Home Guard is more interesting lately, but find little time for golf. Even so, he can address the ball in many ways, I hear. Stick to it, Jack, the blue pencil war can't last for ever.

George Simmons reports fit and well, and having a quiet time. Like all exiles, he is browned off. Never mind, George, it's all for the good of the cause. I could say a lot, but won't.

Our latest exile, Tommie Coffey, is at Manchester. He appears to be firmly established and enjoying life. Stick it, Tom. I fancy you won on the deal. I can see us all going yet.

News is to hand from our old pal, Ron Greenhalgh. He is still in Ireland, and still on the instructor's billet. Fit and well, he sends greetings. Good luck, Ron. There is a letter on the way.

A welcome visitor is our old friend Stan Gill. Stan looks very fit and well, and I am hoping to have more news of him for you in the next issue.

All's well and peaceful are our days and nights. The old shack still stands and our flag is mast high. Good luck to you all and a speedy and safe return home.

Cheerio, Forces! Over to you. Over.

O.H.I..

## Report of Annual Conference

(Continued from page 76.)

### BENEVOLENT FUND.

Since the last Council meeting, at which the idea of establishing a Waterguard Benevolent Fund was mooted, the Executive had examined proposals put forward by one of the Councillors and reluctantly reached the conclusion that it was not a practicable proposition. It was pointed out that so many other channels for relief exist at the present time that the need for the setting up of such a Fund was not great, and it would be necessary to have a wide field of objectives if it was to be attractive to members.

Association funds were altogether insufficient to inaugurate and maintain a scheme that would be in any way comparable with those in operation elsewhere, and from which our members could claim assistance. A remarkable feature had been the absence of applications for help from the small Distress Fund which the Association had carried for many years, and the Council decided that more publicity should be given to the existence of this Fund. But whilst there was general agreement on the impracticability of giving effect to the particular proposals before the Council, it was felt that the matter should not be entirely shelved and could be borne in mind for the future.

### POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION.

On this important item the Council had the advantage of stepping off on firm ground, as they had before them an Executive Committee Report recommending a scheme of Reconstruction on broad bases. From the discussion it was clear that the Executive Committee had rightly sensed the desires of the membership on this subject, and the principles embodied in the scheme were adopted with slight modifications. Although this was the final outcome of discussion, it was not reached as a result of brief consideration, for under the various heads Councillors spoke in most enlightening manner on the deficiencies of the present organisation and the means to be adopted in effecting improvements.

Additionally, the Council heard with great interest the views of one area which had, after devoting much time and thought to the question, produced a scheme of wide scope. The congratulations of the Council to this area for its fine effort were well deserved, but representatives were convinced that our submissions to the Official Side at some later stage must not only be sound in theory, but capable of practical operation. That we should take steps to secure the greatest measure of co-operation with the Waterguard Superintendents and Surveyors Association was obviously the next move, and the Council gave authority for appropriate action to be taken.

### INCOME TAX ASSESSMENTS.

The General Secretary reported that the question of setting up an autonomous Income Tax Branch in the C. and E. Department was the subject of negotiation between the Board and the Inland Revenue Department at the moment. He said the proposal had received strong support from all sides.

### BEVERIDGE REPORT.

This much-debated report had the blessing of the Council in so far as it provides a genuine and long-needed effort to improve the system of social insurance but the position of Civil Servants under the proposals has not yet been made clear, and information on that aspect is to be sought in conjunction with other Service organisations.

### MEMBERSHIP DRIVE.

The excellent work of Messrs. Battersby and Shaw, in connection with the recent membership drive, was referred to, and it was generally agreed that it had proved the value of organisation and sustained publicity. The Organising Secretary gave some interesting details of the results achieved to date and of the revival of interest in Association affairs. The Council agreed that the appointment of a Publicity Officer should be considered, and at a later stage in the proceedings Mr. Shaw was selected to fill this post, but as the Constitution does not provide for such office the appointment will be confirmed at the next Conference.

### ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS.

With the resumption of annual Council meetings it was felt that normal procedure regarding the election of Councillors should again operate according to the Constitution. This means that half of the Council who would have retired last time but for the outbreak of war will face re-election for the next Conference. The Council decided that the constitutional procedure should be resumed.

### COUNCIL REPRESENTATION.

A resolution from Northern Ireland seeking direct representation to Council met with some sympathy from representatives present and gave rise to discussion on the subject generally. The Organising Secretary mentioned that just prior to the outbreak of war he had prepared a new scheme of representation which included Northern Ireland, but subsequent happenings had precluded any Executive consideration. In all probability this scheme would not now meet existing circumstances, but a full report on Council representation, with particular reference to Northern Ireland, might be drawn up by the Executive Committee and submitted to the next Conference.

It was agreed that this should be done.

### FINANCE.

The Organising Secretary dealt with the statement of accounts in detail and said that whilst income had shown considerable improvement it had not been sufficient to overtake the sharp increase of expenditure consequent on the resumption of the Annual Conference and the attendance of provincial representatives on the Executive Committee. To enable the Association to function properly, having in mind the number of staff in the Forces, every effort must be made to increase membership, and he believed that if everyone worked to this end there would be no difficulty in balancing income and expenditure.

Despite the small adverse balance this year he was not unduly anxious as to the future, and he paid special tribute to the untiring efforts of all the District Organisers who had co-operated whole-heartedly and effectively in the membership drive. The Financial Statement was adopted.

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND REPRESENTATIVES.

The election of Association Officers and Representatives resulted as follows:—

President	...	...	Mr. W. E. Standing
General Secretary	...	...	Mr. W. H. Powell
Organising Secretary	...	...	Mr. A. E. Farmer
Assistant Secretary	...	...	Mr. H. L. Boalch
Editor, "Customs Journal"	...	...	Mr. D. T. Sutherland
Treasurer, "Customs Journal"	...	...	Mr. A. E. Farmer
Publicity Officer	...	...	Mr. C. F. Shaw

Notice of amendment to Constitution has been given to provide for the post of Publicity Officer, and Mr. Shaw will act in this capacity in the meantime.

### Joint Committee of Customs and Excise Associations.

Representatives ... .. Messrs. Powell, Farmer, Boalch and Ramsay

### Customs and Excise Departmental Whitley Council.

Representatives ... .. Messrs. Powell and Farmer

### Suggestions Committee.

Representative ... .. Mr. Boalch

### Executive Committee.

Messrs. Burgess, Clarke, Grant, Reilly and Shaw were elected.

### CONCLUSION.

This report of the Conference is not a complete record of the whole of the proceedings, or, indeed, of all the items that were discussed, but it is sufficient to indicate that the three days' sitting was fully occupied. In this regard, a special word of thanks is due to the Chairman, Mr. W. E. Standing, for his handling of a long and sometimes difficult job with patience and understanding, and he was warmly thanked by members for his work.

## WHY REORGANISE ?

The P.S.A. have again, after almost twelve years and in the middle of war, placed the question of Waterguard reorganisation in the forefront of Association policy. Already a skeleton scheme, round which the final plan will be built, has been agreed by the Council and is being studied by members. It may be appropriate, then, to consider not only the immediate reasons which have determined this step and the ends it seeks to attain, but to express the general principles which animate Waterguard activities in the sphere of Whitley and Staff discussion.

The immediate reason for raising the question of reconstruction was the legitimate one of protecting, in the first place by affirmation, our right to be heard in any discussion of reconstruction which the Board and the Treasury may find it necessary to initiate in respect of the C. and E. Department. An equally valid reason was the apprehension that more powerful and less scrupulous groups might exploit such a situation to improve their conditions of service and maintain the quality of their work at the expense of the Preventive Service. Further reason was to be found in the opinion widely held in the Waterguard that in respect of allocation of responsibility, staffing and performance and direction of work, the structure of the Branch is archaic and unsuited to the present demands of the job; and to the belief that the valuation placed on the work of the Preventive grades is unduly low and requires immediate and more just review.

But in addition to these reasons arising from considerations of "enlightened self-interest," principles not usually credited to staff unions have influenced the P.S.A. in its approach to the problem of reconstruction.

The first relates to the personal pride which animates the individual performing an expert and responsible function, and which makes him identify himself with the successes or failures of the organisation which he serves. Preventive work is skilled work. It is responsible work of a wide range and varied character, performed under conditions of an outdoor and unsocial kind which subject those performing it to daily risk of accidents, infection and exposure, and the inconveniences inseparable from work which is conditioned by the movements of aircraft and shipping.

It is justifiable cause for pride that members of the Waterguard have faced and overcome these occupational hazards, and have proved capable, under the most exacting tests, of meeting every emergency with efficiency and such tact and good humour that when those sections of the public with whom they come in contact indulge in criticism of the Civil Service, "the Customs" are expressly excluded from their strictures. It is also a point of pride, as well as of honour, in the Waterguard to maintain an interest in revenue work and its practical application far beyond the letter of instructions and official requirements.

The second principle which animates the P.S.A. is the belief that it has a duty as a responsible Service body to assist in maintaining the good name and efficiency of the Waterguard Branch, and even to advise the controlling body on matters coming within its special knowledge which bear on the effective operation and public repute of the department. In the practical application of these principles, the results of Association policy in the past might not always suggest that the enlightened approach of the P.S.A. to staff and departmental problems has been shared or appreciated by the powers that be. In fairness, however, it should be said that this may have been due to lack of detailed knowledge by individuals resulting from frequent changes in the personnel of the Official Side dealing with Waterguard matters. If this is so, then some comprehensive re-statement of Waterguard aims and opinions on conditions of service and structure of the Branch is a necessity. I do not propose to essay a task which is proper to the P.S.A. Executive, but it may be permissible to indicate some of the anomalies and grievances which the average Waterguard Officer feels can only be remedied by a radical reconstruction of the Preventive Service.

While we recognise that in the matter of departmental expenditure the Treasury is the determining factor, governed in its turn by the Public Accounts Committee acting as the watchdogs of the taxpayer, we fail to see why, as compared

with some of the spending departments, we should suffer the continual irritation resulting from innumerable petty economies in the matter of office design and equipment, quality, style and cut of uniform, allowances in respect of official travel, curtailment and forfeiture of leave, and the chronic pressure of work arising from the policy of maintaining staff on the basis of a minimum establishment without any or adequate reserve.

In respect of remuneration, the basic grade may well complain that having regard to the nature and quality of their duties, not to mention again their unsocial character, they are paid less than grades performing work of a routine and clerical kind. The P.O. grade can see no justification for being rated lower in salary than officials of other departments whose range of work is confined to the performance of one duty which was, and is, performed by P.O.s and A.P.O.s at in-charge ports as a minor though necessary part of a much wider range and higher quality of work. C.P.O.s who are actively responsible for the supervision, direction and advice of P.O.s and A.P.O.s, wonder why their maximum pay, which includes consolidated overtime, should approximate only to that of a grade within the department which exercises no supervisory functions and is, in addition, paid overtime for Sunday attendance and time in excess of 44 hours on weekdays.

On the question of overtime, the comment must be made that the operation of the work-and-wait rule is a running sore in the side of the Waterguard. If salary is conditioned to a fixed hourly attendance, irrespective of the volume of work performed, then it is contended the same principle of attendance should govern overtime payment. The tender regard for the balance-sheets of shipping and railway companies, as expressed in the waiver of charge for baggage examination and other jobs of work requiring extra attendance, might well be tempered by a more even-handed justice in the treatment of Waterguard Officers subjected to the disturbance, amounting at some ports almost to disruption, of domestic and private life, which obedience to the demands of duty involves.

In respect of incremental progression, we have legitimate ground for grievance in the fact that as a result of the last salary adjustment the time required to reach the maximum in the A.P.O. and P.O. grades has been lengthened; and in the case of the basic grade, the principle of adjusting increments to provide "a marriageable wage at a marriageable age" has been entirely disregarded.

Stagnation is a problem which has reached cancerous and insoluble proportions in the Preventive Service, and threatens the whole Waterguard, but particularly the basic grade, with loss of heart and strength. In the case of the A.P.O. grade, the twin evils of stagnation are the denial of the opportunity at a reasonable age, and determined period of service, to qualify for the performance of the full range of P.O. grade duties; and the lack of adequate remuneration to enable the individual to embark on marriage and the assumption of family responsibilities at the period of manhood when he is best fitted psychologically and physiologically to do so. When members of the A.P.O. grade assert that they are recruited as adults and treated as juveniles, they may be pardoned if it is remembered that while they perform responsible tasks and "act" frequently as P.O.s, they are denied officially the status and remuneration which should express in concrete form the recognition of that responsibility. In consequence they are continually subject to rebuffs and indignities from individuals among the public and Service Departments, who relate the standing of a uniformed officer to the visible evidences of rank like arm-bands and epaulettes, and his authority to the power to sign a duty slip or baggage pass.

While anomalies of service and status of so vexatious a kind remain unchanged, members of the P.S.A. may well reflect whether, in respect of the pride and probity they bring to the performance of their work and the concern they feel lest the efficiency and good name of the department should suffer, they are not being "more cavalier than the king"; and harbour doubts as to whether their standard of loyalty and honour is higher than that required by conditions which can neither be commended on grounds of justice nor justified on the score of expediency.

J.C.G.

## Gallery of Apathy Slappers

"What does the Association get you?" asked John Bilkin, A.P.O., Lord of the Watch-house, Hereditary Oracle of the Evening Watch, Keeper of the Seal, Knight Grand Tape Carrier, Grand Tape Bearer. "Everything they've got us we'd have had anyhow, and after the war we'll count for nothing, and we'll be pushed back to what we were years ago, and they can do nothing about it. I don't pay subs. because it's a waste of money, and on principle, because a district organiser once got a mid-week half-day. My principle is—"

"O, happy man," murmured his apathy-slapping P.O., "to have principles so exactly fitted to your purse."

Are there many John Bilkins? I don't think so. What there are, are in every grade. And from every grade I hope to recruit the team of writers which will augment the slaps he should now be getting in every watch-house in the land.

John Bilkin (whom you will meet again) reminds me of "Punch's" idea of pacifists, socialists and "other cranks": pale, red-nosed, skinny, gormless creatures agin the government for reasons of an inadequate digestive system. One can want social reform without being like that. One can be a patriot without jingoism. But the one rare person whose principle, however mistaken, genuinely keeps him out of the Association, or in it but inactive, must forgive us if we declare war on the rest. We have our principles, too, and it is not in any mood of Kiplingite bombast that we declare war on all who blow hot and cold, who go through swing-doors on the other fellow's push. For **we've got the men.**

My request in August for old-time Journal writers to come forward to form a team to make the P.S.A. organ what it should be was well received. The next day I had from an old contributor, now in a higher sphere than then, an offer to stage a "come-back," and another of the fathers of the Association writes in these terms:—

"We are in very bad case if we must depend on come-backs by old champions. . . . Personally I regard my role as being that I should teach budding champions something about ringcraft rather than get in the ring myself. I would insist upon training. No man should step into the arena unless he has a good general knowledge of the construction of the Civil Service, together with a particular knowledge of where his own department fits into the scheme of things."

Yes, this training point is vital. I am, still, however, paging the mute, inglorious Miltons, who are surely not *all* in the Forces. Except for a letter from a young chap in Belfast, whose ideas were passed on, I'm hearing, so far, only from old-timers. Ploughman you met last month. Flat Hat will be coming in soon, he tells me. B.J.B., who has invented a sort of Basic English style of handwriting and is a fine poster artist, too (I hope he and others are plastering the retiring room walls with such; if you haven't a notice-board you should get one, even if it means buying one), has cropped up again. I expect with confidence H.E.P.B. (full of ideas about a Waterguard Year Book), G.T.C., and L.B., my old china, the front legs of "Battshaw." "Nod" is most interested in the idea of a Headquarters Reference Library. Another old friend who wishes to be nameless thinks much of the idea of a special meetings with special speakers (I've attended one already). An ex-P.S.A. worker, now in the Special Inquiry, is watching with interest our developments. So we may get somewhere. **BUT WHERE ARE THE YOUNGER WRITERS?** The stalwart quoted before finishes his letter:

"Many contributors to the Journal give the impression that the Waterguard is some sort of benefit society that can't pay its way. Opinions expressed publicly which betray half-baked knowledge do us very serious harm. Certainly. So, you young fellows, show that you can be vigorous and sagacious. These old fellows think they know it all."

You'll remember that I advocated local literary activity as well as using the Journal. One admirable local effort, remind-

ing me of the short-lived WATCH-HOUSE of Cardiff, 1930, was THE MAVISBANK MAGPIE. Could it not be revived? There is in Glasgow a real poet, and though this is in unambitious form it alone justified the continuance of the little paper, especially as the cause, Comforts for Serving Customs Officers, is so generally neglected:—

### THE NIGHT WATCH.

(No connection with Rembrandt.)

We strode in dudgeon down the lightless quay,  
And cursed in bitter tones the selfish cuss  
Who, ere he beat it, mentioned casually  
That he had left a little job for us.  
"The skipper, like enough, will be in bed,  
But you can always wake him up," he said.  
We stepped on board the ship prepared to brook  
No nonsense from the mate, chief steward or cook,  
And shouted for the master. "He's in bed."  
The mate replied. "Don't wake him up," he said.  
"He stuck it while they bombed us from the air,  
Just growled, 'It's my damned bridge, my place is there.'  
For three days by the wheel he stood, half blind  
For want of sleep, and then the ship was mined."  
He paused. We had no other word to say  
Except "Goodnight," and took our shoreward way  
In silence, till the "Governor" exclaimed:  
"Mined! And we grouse! Why, dammit, I'm ashamed!"

J.C.G.

Can anyone better that, with a slap-apaty angle? Can anyone, further, suggest subjects better suited to a pamphlet form? (See PSAmphlet No. 1, BLOOD MONEY, now being distributed.) And has anyone any newspaper attacks to show me? Three editors have been given their pobs already.

Another report of progress in the New Year.

C. F. S.

## Lines from Leith

It is with pleasure that we read of the award of the D.F.C. "for keenness on toughest operations" to Acting Flight-Lieutenant Archibald Mitchell, formerly A.P.O., Leith. Hull readers will remember he served his probation there a few years ago. Good luck, Archie, and happy landings.

Another of our A.P.O.s on active service, Bill Reid, now Leading Motor Mechanic, R.N., is at present on the West Coast and visits us regularly.

The last news we had of Captain R. Mould, formerly A.P.O., Leith, was that he was somewhere amongst the "Wops" in Sicily. All the best, Bob, and keep smiling.

Archie Wilson, ex A.P.O., Leith, now L.A.C., R.A.F., is in India and doing well.

Jack Oliver, P.O., has gone on Detached Duty to far-off Stornoway, and writes to tell me he finds the job there not so bad. Hull readers again please note.

Sam Chadwick, P.O., and Charlie Douglas, A.P.O., both on D.D. at Greenock, appear to be settling down to the job quite nicely there. That's all for now, boys; but let's hear from you whenever you can manage to write. A.F.A.

## PLYMOUTH PRESENTATION

MR. C. J. LAW, P.O.

On Friday, 15th October, an event of considerable interest to the whole Waterguard took place. An event which will, we hope, be the herald of better times for the Service. The "Promotion Send-off" of Mr. C. J. Law, the first of the open competitive examination A.P.O.s to reach the P.O. grade.

In the course of his service Jim had won the affection and respect of every member of the Plymouth staff. He was presented with a fountain-pen and a barometer. The presentation was made by Mr. Stanford, W.S., and everybody present said a few words wishing Jim all the best in the future.—J. McA.

## Southampton Notes

Lieut. Arthur Cheney, D.S.C., R.N.V.R., has again been at close grips with the enemy, this time in Sicilian waters, and press reports of 25th and 26th September are full of praise for his eagerness and enthusiasm in getting his L.C.F. in-shore ahead of zero hour, and in giving his accompanying Commandos A.A. protection until they were all ashore. To quote the "Manchester Evening Chronicle," they were "First in—last out," and it is further evidence of that spirit which gained for Arthur his D.S.C. at Dieppe in 1942.

An October reunion, long anticipated, with Cliff Pearson is probable, as he is now in home waters and due for some leave. Cliff writes appreciatively of the welcome and hospitality enjoyed as the guest of several of our colleagues in Greenock, and in particular of Colin Mac, of whom all Sotonians are always glad to hear.

The ink is scarcely dry on the grand air-mail we receive so regularly from Joe, and to all enquiries the answer is, "He's fine, thanks, and just waiting for that day when he can see you all again." That goes for all of us, too.

From Sub-Lieut. Stan Roberts, R.N.V.R., we have pleasing news by air-mail from New York, where he was recently appointed to another of H.M. ships. Stan, to whom congratulations upon his recent engagement, writes of life "over there" as being a wizard experience. We "get you." Stan! All the best to you and a safe return.

Petty Officers Tom Carnell and Ted Midlane write in again acknowledging their pleasure in news of the lads by mail and the "C.J." Both are well. Tom ("Bring 'em back alive Carnell") says he has managed to get some snapshots of big game at close quarters, while Ted sends us a snapshot of his messmates afloat.

The only R.A.F. news this month is a letter from Pilot-Officer Ron Greenhalgh, who is keeping fit and busy in N. Ireland, where he has been able to visit some of our colleagues recently. We are glad to hear of the hospitality accorded to Ron by our old friend, Mr. W. A. (Bill) Farmer, P.O.—shades of Surrey Docks—which brings to mind our one-time colleague, Bill Turnbull, who has now left hospital after two years' or more treatment, and is now at home.

The London boys will be glad to know of the well-being of Jack Berry, who is at present stationed very near to his home town of Southampton.

Bill Parsons, now quite recovered from his recent accident, writes with good news of Dudley Jarvis, still in the U.K. and quite fit, which also goes for Sergt. Doug. Joy, still very active in the metropolis.

Of the exiles we have little news. At the end of September we had the pleasure of renewing acquaintance with Mr. R. A. Wasp, P.O., after his four years of D.D. at Swansea and Greenock. The latest departure from the port is that of Mr. L. Pead, P.O., now on D.D. at Greenock, where we hope he will have a congenial spell amongst many old friends.

September saw several familiar faces in the Watch House, when our pals from the Clyde and Mersey gave us a look-in during their leave. These visits are always a source of interest and pleasure to us.

We hear that Pat Kiely is likely to sail for Trinidad soon, and we wish him a pleasant spell of service overseas.

Home news is brief, the only item being the report of a special P.S.A. meeting held on 21st September, 1943, to re-affirm P.S.A. policy, reference "Abolition of automatic seizure rewards to the P.O. grade." A good percentage of the available staff attended and, by a narrow majority, P.S.A. policy was re-affirmed.

With the arrival of the Conference Report, we hope to be able to report on a District Meeting in a near future issue. Meanwhile, the boys remain well and send you all their good wishes, with Christmas and New Year greetings to those overseas. If you have any address revisions to make, especially with regard to "C.J." despatch, please let us know. We'll do the rest.

Cheerio, Forces!

L.B.

## Greenock News

### P.S.A. Meeting.

An Association meeting was held at Cardwell Bay on September 15th, mainly for the purpose of listening to the Area Councillor, Mr. Grant, A.P.O., of Glasgow, tell us about the Annual Conference. The rather poor attendance was doubtless due to a message received earlier in the day stating that Mr. Grant would be unable to attend as he had not been able to get an exchange of duties. The message added that although the C.P.O. was willing to grant the necessary exchange, the P.O.s concerned objected.

The return of Messrs. Sandford and Cooper to their home ports and the resignation of the Secretary, Mr. McCurdy, created four vacancies, as follows (owing to the very few P.O.s present, their Whitley Representative was elected by ballot some days later):—Chairman, Mr. R. G. Salmon, P.O.; Local and District Secretary, Mr. D. H. Fitch, A.P.O.; District Organiser, Mr. C. McDougall, A.P.O.; Whitley Representative, Mr. G. K. Stones, P.O.

Having lost from our meetings, upon his transfer to Hull, the genial and familiar figure of Mr. Girling, we are fortunate in securing as his successor such a keen Association man as Mr. Murray, who, as most will know, is C.P.O. Councillor for Scotland. Mr. Murray undertook Mr. Grant's task of reporting on the Conference. He began by remarking that the reason for Mr. Grant's absence did not say much for the grade responsible, and that it was that sort of thing which was keeping us down and stopping us from improving the job. He then entertained us to a lucid though unrehearsed account of the Conference, recreating many of the incidents and odd remarks not pictured in the formal report. It was learned with regret, however, that neither councillor ever received the proposals made by Greenock District for discussion at the Conference.

The proposal to abolish P.O.'s automatic seizure awards provoked lively discussion. Although it seemed to me at the time that particularly sound and forceful arguments were advanced against the scheme, the consequent ballot-paper still bears only one name on the "against" side. (Mine!)

It was brought to the notice of the meeting that a local firm of motorboat owners advertised that vessels requiring their services at night should show a red light over a white, i.e., the same as the quarantine signal. This news occasioned considerable surprise even amongst the old hands of the port, but owing to the lateness of the hour, discussion was adjourned. It would be interesting to hear the legal view on this probably unique occurrence.

### Forces News.

We had the pleasure of taking Cliff Pearson and a shipmate for a "busman's holiday" the other day when his ship was in. In spite of the temporary loss of his "titfor" in the "drink," Cliff seemed to find genuine pleasure in this brief to the Waterguard, and found solace in telling us in very nautical language just why he is not quite so passionately keen on being in the Navy as upon the day he volunteered. He cannot imagine ever again "nattering" about awkward baggage watches now that he has to do "nought to midnight" every day!

Also seen here were Corp. Malcolm MacLaren, R.A.F.V.R., of Grangemouth, home from Rhodesia, where he was an Aircraft Recognition Instructor, and P.O. Menzies, of London, back from Canada, complete with "wings."

We never seem to hear a word about our own lads, so must assume that no news is good news. It would be nice, though, to get a line from any ex-Greenockians or Old Dovorians.

B. A. BENNING.

## CIVIL SERVICE LIFE-BOAT FUND

The following subscriptions received during the period ended 19th October, 1943, are gratefully acknowledged:—

	£	s.	d.
Waterguard: Liverpool ... ..	22	2	1
London ... ..	6	12	6

A. V. WEST,  
Principal, Surveyors' Branch.

## Waterguard Spotlight.

"It is with pleasure that we read of the award of the D.F.C., 'For keenness on toughest operations,' to Acting Flight-Lieutenant **Archibald Mitchell**, formerly A.P.O., Leith."—Lines from Leith, P.—

### ATHLETES MAN THIS FLAK SHIP.

"A crew of athletes man an L.C.F. (landing craft flak) now operating off Italy. They include 15 Birmingham ex-policemen, now Royal Marines, who help to man the guns. One gun, 'Coventry's Reply,' is manned by an ex-P.C. from Coventry.

"Their commanding officer, **Lieut. A. Cheney, D.S.C.**, went with the British international gymnastic team to Sweden in 1938. Lieut. A. S. Hasler, R.M., a Polytechnic Harrier, has run the half-mile in 1 min. 58.3 secs. Gunners include Company Corporal Jim Champ, 6ft. 3in. Fleet middle-weight champion, and Marine R. P. Huggins, Briston (Norfolk), light-weight champion of the Marine Division, Portsmouth.

"Their football team is still unbeaten. In the Sicily landings the ship led in the Commandos, 45 minutes before zero hour, and stayed to give A.A. protection until everything was ashore.

"One of the guns is named 'Wee Jock—Retribution,' after a gunner killed at his gun beside the commanding officer in another ship in the Dieppe raid. Lieut. Cheney will always have one gun with that name in any ship of his."

—*Evening Standard*, 25th September, 1943.

### RUNCORNIAN'S ADVENTURE.

"The second-in-command of the first British landing craft to enter the Italian port of Brindisi since the outbreak of war was **Sub-Lieutenant John Landells Abbott**, of 12, Coronation Road, Runcorn. The vessel was similar to those used for conveying infantry. It was taking the advance naval party and was in charge of Lieutenant H. M. Love, of Barhead, Glasgow. The craft was directed through the minefields into the harbour with Italian aid.

"The following day Sub-Lieutenant Abbott was one of those who had the unique experience of dining at an Italian officers' mess, when there were present about 500 Italian Army officers in bright uniforms of delicate chocolate and gold, with polished riding boots, among whom two victorious Britishers looked more like prisoners of war in their tattered uniforms! Abbott was known in Runcorn amongst the shipping community as a Customs official. He was in the Merchant Navy before entering the Civil Service.

"He is 27, and has been in the Middle East for some time. Mrs. Abbott, who is employed in the Ministry of Labour at Runcorn, is a native of Liverpool. Their home has been in Runcorn during the last three years."

—*Liverpool Echo*, 4th October, 1943.

## Glasgow News

Whether the P.S.A. publicity campaign was responsible or the fact that for once the exigencies of the Service permitted, the Glasgow District P.S.A. meeting, held in Mavisbank on Friday, October 15th, struck an all-time high percentage for attendance. The principal items on the agenda were "Seizure Awards," and the election of office-bearers for the forthcoming year, held over from the adjourned A.G.M.

Keen disappointment was expressed by the members at the uncompromising attitude of the Official Side on the P.S.A. claim for abolition of automatic seizure awards, and the following resolution was unanimously agreed, the District Secretary being instructed to forward it to P.S.A. headquarters.

"That this District of the P.S.A. reaffirms its support of the claim that payment of automatic seizure awards to Preventive Officers and Assistant Preventive Officers should cease."

Election of office-bearers was a lively business. Mr. F. F.

Shannon, P.O., was a unanimous choice for Chairman, as was Mr. H. Gibson, P.O., for District Secretary. The P.O. and A.P.O. Whitley posts, however, had to be decided by ballot, and the following were elected:—

P.O., Mr. Geo. Harvey; A.P.O.s, Mr. R. G. Painter and Mr. J. C. Grant.

An account of the September Executive Committee Meeting was given by the A.P.O. area representative, particular reference being made to the man-power problem and its implications for the immediate future.

The position in Glasgow relative to Public Holidays, consequent on re-scheming under D.W.O. 17/43, produced heated discussion, and resulted in Whitley representatives being instructed to examine the question of the number and allocation of paid Public Holidays, with particular reference to September 27th, which had been agreed as one of the days for which overtime pay should be granted, and which had subsequently been cancelled by the Collector.

At the time of going to press there is more than a rumour current in Glasgow that very high officials are due to visit the port and neighbourhood. From the staff point of view, we welcome any inspection, in the assured confidence that the quality of our work and calibre of the Waterguard can withstand the closest scrutiny. Our only complaint is that examination of Waterguard grievances is too frequently a two-dimensional one governed by the area of written reports, which, however just they may be, cannot give a complete picture of the difficulties associated with Preventive work, and of the never-failing initiative and resource exercised by officers in overcoming them.

## "THERE IS A TIDE—"

Shakespeare's words have significance for the Preventive Staff Association to-day. Your Secretaries and Councillors know this, or otherwise we should not have had any policy on Post-War Reconstruction. Considerable time has been spent both at Council and Executive Committee meetings to arrive at the present stage of this subject, viz., the broad outlines. Have the Districts given the subject the same consideration?

The next step, the filling-in of the details, will occupy much more time, and it behoves each and every member to attend his District meetings and express his views in order that his representative may be fully aware of his wishes.

Another question which has taken a lot of time at Council and E.C. meetings is Seizure Rewards. The 1942 Conference decided on a policy and instructed your representatives accordingly. One can only assume that those Councillors who carried the resolution to abolish Seizure Rewards were instructed to do so by their Districts. After this policy had been agreed, and the initial steps to implement it taken, someone puts a spanner in the works, and in order to find out what is the opinion of the members, the 1943 Council instructed the General Secretary to circularise the districts. It has been reported that in one district a meeting specially convened to discuss the General Secretary's Circular was attended by seven members. This district, allowing for depletions of staff by reason of D.D., etc., still numbers some forty members.

Is this district exceptional, or has attendance at district meetings fallen to a similar "low" in other districts?

Other subjects which have a great bearing on the future of the Department have been discussed at Council meetings, but I venture to suggest without a full attendance and discussion having been accorded them at the district meetings.

What has this to do with the quotation from Shakespeare? Just this:

I believe that we are afloat on a full sea, in a good ship—the P.S.A., officered by good men—the present Secretariat, but with a very doubtful crew—the members.

Unless the members show more interest in Association business than has been apparent in the past few years we may find that we were not prepared to take the tide at the flood and are destined to spend most of our life "bound in shallows and in miseries."

And whose would be the fault?

"SARTOR."

(This non-de-plume, which is really a Latin pun, hides the identity of a Councillor of many years' standing, who is, therefore worth listening to. More "policy" article to follow.)

—*Publicity Secretary.*)

## CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."

Sir,

Mr. Edward W. Mera, in his letter in the last issue, asks for an authoritative answer to the suggestion that *affiliation with the T.U.C. would involve the obligation to strike if called upon by that body to do so.*

The plain facts are that the General Council of the T.U.C. has no power whatever to call out a single workman, and that the Unions alone have the power to call a strike.

Some correspondents seem to forget that in 1926, at the time of the General Strike, seven Civil Service Unions, representing 126,000 Civil Servants (nearly one-half of the Civil Service), were affiliated to the T.U.C. They were:—

Union of Post Office Workers.  
Civil Service Clerical Association.  
Post Office Engineering Union.  
Association of Officers of Taxes.  
Post Office Controlling Officers' Association.  
C.S. Sorting Assistants' Association.  
Temporary Civil Servants.

During the same period the P.S.A. was affiliated to the Labour Party.

This question of strike action in relation to Civil Servants has been argued *ad nauseam*, but to me the issue is quite simple. No Civil Service organisation would be foolish enough to order its members to strike, knowing full well that the members would be too sensible to obey.

W. H. POWELL, *General Secretary.*

Sir,

May I for a moment join issue with your correspondent Mr. S. W. Dutton and register my dissent from his description of what actually happens when Parliamentary representation is in question. He speaks of "purchasing by annual subscription special representation in Parliament over and above that which every man gets in the constituencies." One would think from this statement that we all obtain a measure of political representation free or out of taxation, and that any other effort we made to qualify or condition that representation came under Mr. Dutton's censure. An enthusiasm for Parliament that permits people to make sacrifices to build up a party is apparently a form of political wickedness.

May I ask Mr. Dutton to try a little realism for a change. Are we to suggest to people like Post Office workers, and others whose wages are fixed by comparison with the world of labour, to sit back and allow their destinies to be handled by those who are vouchsafed them freely from some other source? Mr. Dutton says: "If you have the money it would be foolish not to buy anything." That is one way of putting it. There is another way, and I submit it as a more just appraisal of the position. It is not that we pay for goods to be delivered when we subscribe in support of our political faith; it is that we make sacrifices in order that the inevitable expense of running a party may be covered and the elbow-room of doing the job with some hope of success can be achieved.

I am entirely with Mr. Dutton in his description of the basis of true democracy. I wish, however, that the niceness of his philosophical description would also attach itself to his other definitions.—Yours faithfully,

C. J. GEDDES,  
*Acting General Secretary,  
Union of Post Office Workers.*

Dear Sir,

My last letter has brought correspondence, for which I am grateful. It shows that we are awakening to the fact that if we are to create a "brave new world" it is necessary to forgo sectional interests and to cultivate the widest possible outlook. My attention has, however, been drawn to a mistake I made. I said in my letter "the rights of individuality," the correct phrase should, of course, be "the reality of the individual." We are all certain of our existence, whilst any discussion on our "rights" usually leads to trouble. There are so many different ideas as to our "rights" that when any speaker mentions them I know that we are not going to get very far.

It is therefore especially unfortunate that Ploughman, in an informative article, should consider it necessary as a sole criterion of action, a principle which is gradually being discredited in all really responsible political circles. To prevent any misunderstanding I quote liberally. "However opinions may differ," says Ploughman, "on the questions of affiliation itself, there can be no difference of opinion that it is our bounden duty to maintain the right of the individual to freedom of action in a democratic country and regardless to the other issues that may be later involved, we must demand the restoration of the rights of the individual in the community." At an emotional public meeting we would cheer like mad and go home entirely oblivious that we have never had this freedom and will never get it except under anarchism. Freed of the emotional content, all that this principle means in plain Waterguard language is, "We want to do what we damn well like."

For what else is the right of the individual to freedom of action unless it be the right to bring to completion and to his own entire satisfaction the desires of his own nature? And have we any guarantee that he will restrain these desires that they may be considered social? This, of course, is not what Ploughman means, but this is what his principle implies. I have no doubt that he is a good democrat, but I would like to draw his attention to the fact that this idea had quite a lot to do with the fall of France and Spain.

Principles are useless unless they govern all relevant cases, so let us see what irresponsible individualism which is the right name for a certain type of "political liberty" has led us in the past. Round about the 1870's England had the highest degree of political liberty that it has ever had. "Speech and political thought were freer than they had ever been before or are to-day, economically the individual was entirely free at least of any legal restraints (Colt and Postgate, in the "Common People.") But please note that such laws as the Factory Acts were only passed after prolonged agitation and with the greatest reluctance, and society fell "under the spell of the golden age of individualist capitalism."

The question is not whether we should squabble over personal rights, but whether by affiliating to the T.U.C. or any political party, we are tending to promote the system of government by sectional interests, and if so, whether that is desirable. It has never been successful in the past.

Yours faithfully,

S. W. DUTTON.

Sir,

PUBLICITY and/or PROGRESS.

Mr. C. F. Shaw, as newly appointed Publicity to the P.S.A., has launched, in the August issue of the "C.J.", his "Slap Apathy" campaign. He suggests that the "Journal" is to be the platform and that there will be no muzzling. On the latter point I hope he speaks truly, for one item of news which tended to jolt this member out of his apathy was a recent suggestion that contributions to the "Journal" should be censored—a course which would be as injurious to Association interests as it would be dampening to individual enthusiasm.

Now, may I suggest that the apathy which undoubtedly exists or has existed in Association matters is not wholly confined to that portion of the membership which pays its subs. and reads its "Journal"? Without wishing to detract from

the credit due to those who, from a sense of social duty, accept the penalties and the burdens of office, I feel that there exists a degree of apathy among the higher officials of the Association as to the true opinions and aspirations of the members of the body they represent.

The suggestion to eliminate critical correspondence from the "Journal" is one of the things which leads me to make this suggestion, and the appointment of a Publicity Secretary is another. Do not these things tend to indicate that there exists a gap between the scattered body of Association members and those who try to reflect their opinions and represent their interests? The appointment indicates that Headquarters realises that there is such a gap, but I think they have chosen the wrong course in attempting to bridge it. It should not be bridged—it should be eliminated. May I suggest one or two methods by which this may be achieved?

Firstly, I suggest that every effort be made to speed up the dissemination of news from Headquarters to all districts. On my station we receive circulars of E.C. Meetings many weeks after the Meetings have taken place. News in the "Journal," too, is many weeks old by the time it reaches us, and our local representative to the 1943 Conference is still waiting for the official Minutes of the proceedings more than a month and a half after the Conference took place. How can we be expected to take an interest in the battle for Naples when we do not even know that the Allies have landed in Sicily? (And that metaphor will be badly out-of-date by the time this gets into print?)

Secondly, I suggest that the Executive Committee defers any further progress in the matter of submitting Post-war Re-organisation proposals until it ascertains whether the scheme approved by the Conference is generally approved by the membership. A scheme of much wider scope was approved by a Cardiff District Meeting and circulated to other Districts, and I have no doubt that those other Districts had ideas of their own which, owing to the time-lag aforementioned, they did not have opportunity to submit to the Conference. An opportunity of a life-time has been offered to us by the Board, and I feel, as I am sure do many others, that the scheme drawn up by the Executive Committee is too narrow in scope and too selfish in outlook to command much respect.

In this matter of Re-organisation I suggest that we think more of the future of the Department and of the efficient performance of that part of the country's business entrusted to us than of our own immediate interests and prospects. That is the manner of approach which will be expected of us, and that is the manner of approach which is in our own true interest.

Let us grasp this opportunity afforded to us with both hands and, after free and frank discussion, go forward as a united body with a scheme for moulding a better Service for those of our pals at present away to return to. Let us try to make our section, at least, of the Civil Service more deserving of bouquets than brickbats from the public we serve.

To conclude, I quote from a letter received from an A.P.O. friend of mine at present serving in the R.A.F.:—

"Maybe some day our chaps will warrant the respect they always appear to be striving for. 'Tis a true saying that one must give before receiving."

Yours sincerely,  
"F.J."

Sir,

Someone is telling the Board that there is a man-power problem in the Waterguard; that the work cannot be done because there is a shortage in the A.P.O. grade; and that it may be necessary to import temporary labour. Figures will be produced to show this.

Now it is about time we got away from figures based on pre-war conceptions of the work and started inspecting the ports to see what is really going on, to see whether the staff are fully employed, without duplication and overlapping, in the most economic way war circumstances will allow.

Inspections will reveal that all of the work, except rummaging and store guarding, is work proper to the P.O. grade to be done by P.O.s, and that there is a shortage of these officers. It will also be found that many A.P.O.s are paired with P.O.s on boarding duty to assist, but that the A.P.O., carrying little or no executive authority, is really shadowing

and passing on to the P.O. The department cannot now afford to employ the bulk of A.P.O.s as minor manipulatives and bodyguards to P.O.s on boarding duty. That is Watchers' work. Each ship from foreign nowadays requires two or more P.O.s to deal with the work. The present work on ships with security, currency, censorship, foodstuffs, etc., etc., to see to, calls for P.O.s with full powers to act and do the work; and the future of aerial passenger traffic will call for many more experienced P.O.s. Why not make the P.O.s now? There are about 40 who have qualified and been on the cross of expectancy this last three years. There are probably another 200 who could qualify if given the chance, and there are another 200 failed A.P.O.s for rummaging, if necessary.

In these days it is not right to have A.P.O.s (the majority of whom will qualify to be P.O.s) hanging about a boarding P.O., itching to do the work and capable of doing it, but debarré because there are two grades and their relative strengths must be maintained, even if it means duplication and wasted man-power.

JACO.

Dear Sir,

The man-power problem which confronts the Board is one which can easily be solved within this Department. The ever-increasing amount of work which is performed by the P.O. grade—I say the P.O. grade because he takes responsibility for it, although a considerable amount is done by the A.P.O.s—will soon be such that the present P.O. strength will be unable to cope with it. On the other hand, if the P.O. and A.P.O. grades were merged, making one basic grade, the Board would have at their disposal a large and efficient body to carry out the work.

Let me enlarge on this. Take the present-day work. The size and number of the ships necessitates each man performing and taking responsibility for the work he does. For instance, if a dock had three fresh arrivals to board, a C.P.O. could delegate, say, three P.O.s to board them—one, to deal with Ships Surplus Stores; two, the List 142; and three, any other work, such as security, censorship, deck cargo, etc. By this means, with the work fairly apportioned, the vessels would be boarded more efficiently and quickly than one P.O. having to "sign for" after being satisfied with his A.P.O.s' work.

Another example is Passengers' Baggage. All baggage should be dealt with to finality by the one grade; whereas now, when a passenger presents something for duty to an A.P.O., he must refer him to another officer, where he usually has to wait until a "snowed under" P.O. can accept the duty, instead of each man clearing his own passenger. Similarly with a seizure. The man who declares a passenger is in an excellent position to judge whether he is attempting to defraud or not. But an A.P.O. is not empowered to render a Form 104, and by the time he has disengaged his P.O. (who may be up to his eyes in receiving duty), the would-be smuggler has had time to think of some excuse, at which stage, as we know from our experience, it is very difficult to convey a time picture to a third party. I say that one man should deal with the passenger and, after conducting his inquiries, submit the case for the adjudication of a senior officer.

Further, what of the increased amount of work involved in post-war passenger air travel, and new fields which may re-open even before the war ends? There are some 500 A.P.O.s in the U.K. to-day, not counting the 300 men in the Forces, with service ranging from nine to fourteen years, who have not even had the opportunity of proving to the Board that they are capable of performing the duties of a P.O.; and the most senior of these men would not have got that opportunity in the next four or five years **had there been no war**. I venture to say that almost 100 per cent. of these men would qualify for the P.O. grade now, instead of which, under the present system, they are stagnating until they are about forty years of age, at which time a man should normally be thinking of more administrative work rather than studying and polishing up something of which he has had practical experience for years, in order to qualify for his first promotion.

Putting it in a nutshell, then, here we have a job of work (and shortly a bigger one), and we have fully trained men to perform it, if only the Board will give them the opportunity of proving it.

R.

The Editor, "Customs Journal."

Dear Sir,—Reference report of Annual Conference in September Journal, page 76. May I point out that a naval officer does not wear a gabardine with a belt. Ratings wear belts. Officers would be appalled by such a suggestion. If any alteration is contemplated to our Customs uniform may I suggest that it would be a sound idea to keep away from styles favoured by ratings, postmen, night watchmen, and the like? The former are all good fellows, I know, but we should not be confused with them.

I can remember one period shortly before the war in K.G. Dock, London, being mistaken for a baggage agent, railway porter, sanitary inspector, lockman and a taxi driver all in one week.

A little thing like a belt is not going to do us very much good. Could we not persuade the powers-that-be to go into a huddle with a naval tailor with a view to adopting the naval reefer and slacks, bridge coat and cap, our gold braid still to run from aft to for'd to distinguish it from the Navy?

Most of us in the Service are looking forward to a resumption of departmental duties, but many of us are dreading a return to the wearing of sackcloth that goes with it. In the Navy one can obtain material from the service and have it made up by a reputable tailor to fit the individual rather than the entire grade. Could we not do the same? Customs serge is good. The cut, fit and design of the reefer particularly would be a constant source of anguish to a discriminating scarecrow.

Yours faithfully,  
J. W. H. BERRY.

(Our correspondent, one-time A.P.O., is now a Lieut. R.N.V.R.—Ed.)

## Cardiff District Meeting

A meeting of the above was held at the usual place on 14th October. A fair proportion of A.P.O.s attended, the usual stalwarts of local P.S.A., but the P.O. representation was poor.

Mr. Grice (A.P.O. Councillor) gave a report of the last Conference in reading the conference minutes.

The reference to abolition of seizure awards occupied an appreciable time. Because of this, the reconstruction proposals were but briefly outlined and we gained little satisfaction at the report of the reception given to our local (counter) reconstruction proposal.

The office of District Secretary is now taken over by Mr. F. Jackson, Barry, and other P.S.A. officials were re-elected.


At this meeting we bade adieu to Dick (B.S.) Scorey, granted special permission to join H.M. Forces (Army), in a Technical Branch. Dick joins an O.T.U. at Carlisle.

There has been but little response to request for news of our fellows in the Forces. Sandy keeps in touch, but must give the G.P.O. a headache catching up on his numerous moves. J.K.K. recalled from leave for posting overseas. Heard that friend Paterson (Cardiff) used up a recent leave to get married—must be something contagious in this marriage business. The two Jacks, Adams and Collier, are still in this country and enjoying!!! every moment of Service life.

We shall have to get tough with our type of Doughboy. They will bring it ashore and give us the trouble of taking it back on board. Will have to smack their wrists soon.

Get your name in print, lads. Let's hear from you. Your colleagues in other branches of the Forces will like to know of your whereabouts.

F. S. L.

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