

Superannuation.

MEMORANDUM on the Application to Certain Classes of Civil Servants of the Superannuation (Prison Officers) Act, 1919.

Resolution.—That the Committee should consider the desirability of the application to all classes of Civil Servants liable to night duty as a normal condition of service of the Superannuation (Prison Officers) Act, 1919.

A copy of the Superannuation (Prison Officers) Act, 1919, is attached.

The resolution given above was adopted by the Civil Service Federation in 1919, and originated with the Customs and Excise Waterguard Federation, whose members for many years have claimed special superannuation terms on account of their exceptional conditions of service.

The Waterguard Service, comprising, in all, about 1,800 officers, exists principally for the prevention of smuggling and for this purpose they are employed by night and by day on Sundays and holidays as well as on week-days at all the creeks and ports, open harbours and estuarial waters of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.

Besides the purely preventive duties, the staff are responsible for a large number of miscellaneous departmental and extra-departmental duties, some of which involve some risk to health, life and limb, e.g., carrying out quarantine duties under the Public Health Acts involves occasionally boarding vessels infected with cholera, yellow fever or plague; the measurement of deck cargoes for the Board of Trade and Trinity House, which, having regard to the nature and stowage of the cargo, is a dangerous job at times, particularly at night time.

In open harbours and estuarial waters the work of "Boarding" vessels is done by means of steam launches, though at a few places it is done by means of rowing boats. Not infrequently boarding is effected while the vessel is under way by climbing a rope, or "Jacob's" ladder, sometimes 20 to 30, or even 60 feet long, and not always properly secured.

The work of rummaging involves searching vessels from crow's nest to bilge and from fore-peak to propeller-shaft tunnel. The nature of this duty and the conditions under which it is carried out make rummaging an arduous and dangerous job. There is risk of infection from con-handling seamen's effects; there is risk of contracting pulmonary trouble through rapid changes of temperature in passing from hot engine-rooms and stoke-holds to the open deck, and risk of injury through working in dark hatches, holds and peaks with unprotected hatchways.

Night work is a normal condition of employment, between 40 and 45 per cent. of the staff being on duty between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. Inter-mittent night duty, under the most favourable conditions, involves a certain amount of physical strain, and when performed under conditions incidental to Customs Preventive work the strain

first place to the Council Secretaries who form a Remissions Committee. If a scrutiny by this Committee satisfies them that only the section or grade submitting the proposal is concerned in it the reference to the appropriate Sectional or Grade Committee is granted; otherwise it is rejected and the originating body is informed that, other interests being affected, it must be dealt with in another way, i.e., by Inter-sectional or Grade Committees, or by reference to the Council itself.

In this way an awkward pitfall is avoided, and the smooth working of the whole machine is materially assisted.

The foregoing is an attempt to explain the structure and methods of working of the Waterguard Sectional Committee.

It is a good machine. It works well. It fits perfectly into the system, which has been described by people outside this Department who are well-qualified to form an opinion as the most efficient Whitley organisation in the Civil Service. That the whole system was devised in 1919 by a Committee without any experience to guide them, and has remained unaltered in any detail, speaks very highly indeed of the constructive ability of the originators.

But "forms are lifeless things without the spirit that animates them" and without a spirit of co-operation and the influence of mutual goodwill the machine would have remained unproductive and, indeed, unworkable. Fortunately, these essential elements existed, were brought into play, and continue to operate with results which, if they do not afford complete satisfaction, are better than could be secured under any other system.

Preventive Staff Association.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS.

PLYMOUTH & CARDIFF DISTRICTS.

Election of District Officers.

The undermentioned members have been elected unopposed as the District Officers in the Districts specified. All subscriptions should be forwarded to the District Organiser, as soon as possible. The District Secretary is responsible for the policy of the Association, and for convening meetings, etc.

Plymouth District.—District Secretary: Mr. W. A. Stone, P.O.; District Organiser: Mr. J. W. Erickson, A.P.O.

Cardiff District.—District Secretary: Mr. W. H. Johnson, P.O.; District Organiser: Mr. R. H. Goff, A.P.O.

For the Executive Committee.

J. HALL, President.

J. T. SUTTON, Org. Secretary.

"WEMS" is commencing a course of tuition for Preventive Officership next month. Apply through Secretary, "Customs Journal."

is much greater. Boarding vessels at night from launches or open boats is a tricky business, while revenue work at river wharves, quays and in docks, nearly always ill-lighted and often intersected by railways being operated all the time is not without danger.

Vital statistics relative to the staff are not kept by the Customs and Excise Department, and endeavours to secure recent particulars of deaths and accidents on duty have been unsuccessful. Information relative to the years 1909-10 and 1911 was, however, furnished to a Departmental Committee of Inquiry in 1912 and is printed in their Report, an extract from which is appended:

INJURIES ON DUTY.

Rank.—Chief Preventive Officer: Number of injuries necessitating absence: Under one month, 1; Total, 1.

Preventive Officer. — Number terminating fatally, 1; Number resulting in retirement, 1; Number of injuries necessitating absence: Under one month, 20; Over one month and under three months, 10; Total, 32.

Preventive Man.—Number terminating fatally, 3; Number of injuries necessitating absence: Under one month, 82; Over one month and under three months, 12; Over three months, 3; Total, 100.

Launch Service.—Number terminating fatally, 1; Number of injuries necessitating absence: Under one month, 28; Over one month and under three months, 5; Over three months, 1; Total, 35.

Totals.—Number terminating fatally, 5; Number resulting in retirement, 1; Number of injuries necessitating absence: Under one month, 131; Over one month and under three months, 27; Over three months, 4; Total, 168.

Clear recognition that the claim put forward by the Waterguard Federation is justified by the facts is afforded by the following extract from a Report, made in 1903, of a Departmental Committee, of which the Deputy Chairman of the Board of Customs was Chairman, which reads (par. 16)—

“Retirement of Waterguard Officers.—The Committee also desire to place on record their opinion that all men who remain on Waterguard work, active rummaging, etc., as distinguished from supervision, until they reach the age of 55, should be retired.

“The duties cannot be efficiently performed by men who are not perfectly vigorous and active, and at the age of 55 it is held that men who have spent all their official time in rummaging, etc., are hardly suitable for further service in this branch of duty.

“The Committee, therefore, recommend that steps should be taken to provide for the retirement of men who remain Preventive Officers or Boatmen (afterwards Preventive Men and now Assistant Preventive Officers) in the Waterguard Department on reaching the age of 55. The full superannuation allowance of 40-60ths of their salary should be granted for 35 years of service, or pro rata for any shorter period to these officers.”

In 1906 the Treasury, while rejecting the claim made by Waterguard Associations, and

supported by the Report above referred to, for special terms of retirement, sanctioned a system of transfer of elderly Preventive Men to lighter duties of another, and lower, grade on shore, and, as a result of an inquiry held in 1912, this system was extended to the cases of all Preventive Men on reaching the age of 50 years who were no longer fit for active Waterguard work.

The foregoing fairly substantiates the particular claim of the Customs and Excise Waterguard Federation; but the resolution goes beyond their specific claim for special terms of superannuation for the Preventive Service and urges consideration of the application of the Superannuation (Prison Officers) Act, 1919, to all classes liable to night duty as a normal condition of service. It may be that this suggestion is too widely drawn; but, on the other hand, classes may exist in the Civil Service whose conditions of service are so exceptional as to justify the application to them of the terms of the Act.

One way of meeting the case which may commend itself to the Staff Side would be to seek an alteration of the Superannuation Acts empowering the Treasury to set up a Schedule of clauses to which the 1919 Act should apply and to include at once within the schedule the classes comprising the Waterguard Service and such others as may be agreed upon. In any case I suggest that the claim for the application of the 1919 Act to the Waterguard Service should be embodied in the Superannuation programme of the Staff Side.

A. EDWARD HOWELL.

Note.—The Superannuation (Prison Officers) Act, 1919, provides for optional retirement at 55 years of age, and that in calculating the Superannuation Allowance or additional allowance the proportion of pensionable emoluments in respect of the twenty-first and every subsequent year of service shall be two-eightieths instead of one-eightieth as respects pension and two-thirtieths instead of one-thirtieth as respects the “lump sum” allowance.

G. R. R. Goods.

The “Daily Mail” asserted on January 28th that a German scheme had been disclosed, designed to evade British taxation by the despatch of German goods to Dublin, whence they would be forwarded to England as Irish.

The plan was fully described in the translation of a circular which was sent to prominent German business firms, headed “strictly confidential.”

Should the German goods be exported from Ireland to England, the circular claims that the following savings would be effected:—

- (1) Non-payment of the 26 per cent. levy.
- (2) Non-payment of the 33 1-3 per cent. duties levied on goods according to the British Key Industries Act.

Non-payment of the 33 1-3 per cent. duties (anti-dumping) levied on certain German goods in accordance with Parts I. and II. of the Protection of Industries Act, 1921.