

The Customs Journal.

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Fortnightly, 2d.

General Secretary's Notes.

Communications relative to this column should be addressed to the General Secretary, 13 Richardson St., Smithdown Road, Liverpool.

The following official correspondence has passed:—

Custom House, London, E.C., 3.
5th Sept., 1919.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 26th July, E. 425, the Board desire me to say that as regards future aliens staff arrangements, the interests of the Waterguard Service will not be overlooked.

Yours faithfully,
(signed) A. J. DYKE.

E. 421.
9th Sept., 1919.
Dear Sir,

The Board have had before them your letter of the 12th ult., in continuation of your previous letters of the 7th and 22nd May, respecting paragraph 5 of General Order 32/1919.

These three letters raise the following points:—

(1) that the proper interpretation is that the reassessment of salaries on 1st April, 1917, should be based on the new, not on the old rates of increment (letter of 7th May).

(2) that the Deputy Chairman gave you to understand at your first interview that this was the case, and did not correct this misunderstanding at the second interview (letter of 22nd May).

(3) that the Arbitration Board should be asked to interpret Heading 9 (letter of 12th August).

As regards the 1st point, Heading 9 lays down that the new scales are to be retrospective to 1st April, 1917. This can only

mean that the new scales, including the new rates of increment, shall have effect from 1st April, 1917; and this again can only mean the new rates of increment shall commence to be earned from 1st April, 1917, but not earlier.

Consequently the old rates were left unaltered up to that date; the proportion of increment at the old rates which had accrued up to the 31st March, 1917, inclusive, was added to the then existing salary; the salary thus reassessed became the salary for the year from 1st April 1917, to 31st March, 1918; and the first increment at the new rates became payable on 1st April, 1918. This is the arrangement sketched in paragraph 5 of G.O. 32/1919, and the Board observe that you do not attempt to show how any other interpretation can possibly be put on Heading 9 of the Agreement.

As regards the second point, the Deputy Chairman explained to you at both interviews that this was the intended arrangement, and the reason for antedating the change so far back as to April, 1917, was to give an immediate financial benefit on 1st April, 1918; and again on 1st April, 1919, thus making the benefit "retrospective for two years" (see paragraph 13 of the enclosure to your own letter of 24th February) and he most certainly neither said nor left unsaid anything at either interview which could possibly have led you to imagine that the new rates would apply to any period before 1st April, 1917.

Any suggestion that he misled you either intentionally or unintentionally is absolutely unjustified.

As regards the third point, the only answer can be that no case has been made out for submission to the Arbitration Board.

Yours faithfully,
(signed) H. W. TROTTER.