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Fortnightly

ONE PENNY

Waterguard Federation.

ANNUAL REPORT.

Gentlemen,

The Annual Account is submitted herewith.

Nothing in the nature of general agitation has been attempted during the past year, owing to the continuation of the war, and the activities of the Civil Service Federation obviated the necessity of separate action on the War Bonus question. The majority of Waterguard officers shared in the success of the Civil Service Federation announced on the 9th September last, when the Treasury conceded as from the 1st July a War Bonus of 4s. a week to those whose ordinary remuneration did not exceed 40s. a week, and 3s. a week to those whose remuneration did not exceed 60s. a week. The inadequacy of this concession in scope and amount to meet the increase in the cost of living, and in comparison with bonuses granted in the various organised Trades, was at once apparent. The Civil Service Federation took immediate action, and have, with commendable vigour, prosecuted the agitation for a war bonus of 10s. a week for Civil Servants receiving up to 40s. a week, and 8s. a week between 40s. a week and £500 per annum, with a proviso against arbitrary reduction after the war. One of the results of this agitation, and not the least important, has been the creation of a Standing Conciliation and Arbitration Tribunal for Civil Servants, a revolutionary change in the history of Service agitation which cannot fail to profoundly affect the relations between the State and its employees, and the future of the Associations. The Civil Service Federation case has been laid before the Tribunal, and a decision is imminent.

The grant to the Preventive Men in March of last year of a special allowance on account of the special duties and responsibilities imposed upon them in consequence of the war naturally influenced opinion among the Preventive Officers in favour of seeking consideration of their legitimate claims in this direction, but it was not until November that a definite mandate was given to the Executive to take action. The Joint Council made arrangements for pressing this claim, but these were held up by the London representatives of the Preventive Officers' Association, pending a decision upon the question, put forward by them, of holding a Conference of the Association in January. When it became possible to proceed with the matter the Executive of the Civil Service Federation desired that all the sectional claims of the constituent Associations should be held over until the war bonus case was settled. The reasons for this request being considered good and sufficient the Joint Council acceded to this request.

The year under report has been notable for the

acquisition of the "Customs Journal" by the Federation. This publication was founded in 1905 by a Committee of Waterguard officers in Hull, working independently of, though in close co-operation with, the Associations. As the result of negotiations an arrangement was concluded at a meeting between the Journal Committee and Messrs. Sullivan and Howell, representing the Federation, held at Hull on the 8th May, whereby the Federation assumed the ownership and control of the Journal, working through the existing Committee acting as a Sub-Committee of the Waterguard Federation. The Editorship of the "Customs Journal" now carries a seat on the Joint Council.

Three questions affecting the interests of the Waterguard Service were dealt with by the Joint Council.

In making the necessary staff arrangements consequent upon the imposition of Ad Valorem duties the Board had delegated to the Officers of the Landing Department the work of assessing and collecting these duties on goods brought by passengers and members of ships' crews. This, while it occasioned a maximum amount of irritation and annoyance to passengers and ships' crews, and unnecessary disturbance in the routine of official duties, and consequent inefficiency, inferred incompetence on the part of the officers of this department.

This reflection upon the capacity of Waterguard officers caused considerable resentment. A petition was forwarded on the 16th July dealing fully with the matter, and strongly urging that Waterguard officers should control the collection of Ad Valorem duties on passengers' and crews' effects. The revised instructions issued later by the Board gave Chief Preventive Officers power to assess and collect these duties within the limits of £3 value of articles liable to assessment. This concession only partially meets the claim put forward by the Federation, and the matter will be reviewed at the Conference to be held in May next.

The arbitrary method of appointing elderly officers to small ports and creeks caused great concern to officers generally, and particularly to those likely to be affected. A grievance bearing some relation to the question of the appointment of officers to small ports, etc., was the unsatisfactory status of officers at those places, who continued to perform work which had been transferred to officers of the Excise branch of the Service. Representations were made to the Board on the 16th July desiring in the first place a reversion to the practice of notifying throughout the department vacancies at small ports and the appointment of officers from among the applicants, and in the second place requesting the Board to restore to the officers concerned at the small ports and creeks the status attaching to these positions previous to the Inquiry. The Board replied on the 30th October to the following effect:—

