

The Customs Journal.

No. 387.

August 23rd, 1919.

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 letters have been forwarded to the Board:—

5th August, 1919.

E. 409, E. 416.

The Hon. Commissioners of H.M.
Customs and Excise.

Honourable Sirs,

Our Executive Committee have considered your Honours' communication of the 15th April last, and while they agree that, broadly speaking, the question of subsistence rates is common to the whole Civil Service, they desire us to submit that certain aspects of the question have a peculiar application to the Customs and Excise Department. We refer more particularly to the systems of selection, and examination for promotion which entail the attendance in London of Preventive Officers and Preventive Men, sometimes in considerable numbers and over a period of several days. The evidence submitted to your Honours with our letter of the 15th July, 1918, which referred in the main to expenses incurred by Officers visiting London, proved conclusively the serious inadequacy of the existing rates. We are desired to point out that it is not reasonably possible to obtain accommodation and food at a cheaper rate than is indicated in the evidence already submitted, and to submit that it is unfair to impose such a heavy burden on the private resources of officers required to visit London on official business.

We are desired to say in regard to your Honours' reference in the letter of the 15th April to the awards of war bonus that instead of these being an argument in favour of the retention of the existing subsistence

rates, they appear to our Executive Committee to demonstrate the necessity of increases in those rates comparable with the increases in salary by way of war bonus.

We are therefore to respectfully and strongly urge that, pending a general settlement of the question of subsistence rates, the rates for London applicable to Preventive Officers and Preventive Men should be those set out in our letter of the 13th April, 1918, (E. 409).

We are, etc.

5th August 1919.

The Hon. Commissioners of
H.M. Customs and Excise.

Honourable Sirs,

Our Executive Committee have had under consideration the rules and regulations governing Civil Aircraft, contained in G.O. 52/1919 (Customs 35), and they note that no provision is made for the appointment of separate staffs at Appointed Aerodromes, but that all the duties in connection with Civil Aircraft, including duties analogous to those performed by the Preventive Staff, are to be dealt with by the Station Officer.

Our Executive Committee assume that this arrangement is due solely to the fact that aircraft traffic is in the initial stage of development, and so does not warrant the appointment of a special staff; but they would be glad to have your Honours' assurance that when the volume of aircraft traffic justified such a course, officers of the Preventive Staff shall be appointed to carry out Preventive duties.

We are, Honourable Sirs,

Your obedient servants,

(Signed) J. HALL, President,
A. EDWARD HOWELL,
General Secretary.

12th August, 1919.

E. 421.

The Hon. Commissioners of
H.M. Customs and Excise.

37522/19

Hon. Sirs,

With reference to your Honours letter of the 14th May, last, and our reply of the 22nd May, our Executive Committee are now informed by the Civil Service Arbitration Board that disputes arising as to the interpretation of the Arbitration Agreement of the 6th March can only be submitted to that Board for adjudication by agreement between the respective signatory parties.

In view of the doubt entertained by our Executive Committee as to the correctness of your Honours' interpretation of the retrospective clause under Heading 9 of the Agreement, we are desired to ask if your Honours are prepared to agree to a reference being made to the Civil Service Arbitration Board.

We are, etc.

12th August, 1919.

E. 419.

Hon. Sirs,

20000/19

Our Executive Committee have considered your Honours' letter of the 15th April last, and we are desired to express their regret that the reversion to the normal age of retirement is intended to take place gradually. We are desired to point out that delay in this matter still further retards the promotion of officers who have already suffered inevitably on account of war conditions, involving as a consequence a cumulative loss of increment ultimately reaching an appreciable amount.

We are also desired to express the concern felt by our Executive Committee at the postponement on an examination for promotion to Preventive Officer until October. The list of candidates successful at the last examination was exhausted more than a month ago, leaving a number of vacancies still open.

More vacancies are occurring, and will occur as time goes on, which cannot be filled until the lapse of about three months in the ordinary course. This continued and additional delay in dealing with the

question of the normal flow of promotion tends to create a sense of injustice, and occasions discontent which our Executive Committee consider is not altogether without justification.

We are to respectfully request that the retirement of officers over the normal age for superannuation, the Examination, the declaration of the result of the Examination, and the appointment of successful candidates to fill the then existing vacancies shall be expediated as much as possible.

We are, Honourable Sirs,

Your obedient Servants,

J. HALL, President,

A. EDWARD HOWELL,
General Secretary.

Thames Pageant.

Monday, August the 4th, 1919, will be a memorable day for the Waterguard Staff. The weather was fine and the dismal looking wharves and warehouses were gaily decorated for the auspicious occasion. Three Torpedo Boats and the Training Ship "Exmouth II" were moored in the Upper Pool, opposite the Custom House. These vessels and all the Merchant Ships, Tugs and Barges were dressed from stem to stern. The Custom House, the Quay and the "Harpy" station were also magnificently decorated and made an ideal place for the Royal Party to embark. The members of the Board and their friends favoured the vessel with their presence, finding accommodation on the "Harpy," and the lower deck was occupied by the Band of the Royal Marine Artillery who played a splendid selection of nautical and patriotic music to the spectators while they waited the arrival of the Royal party. The Custom House Quay was packed with Customs Officials of all grades, and their friends. A full share of tickets to view the procession from the Quay were allotted to the Waterguard Officers. J. A. Hawkins, Esq., M.B.E., Waterguard Superintendent, assisted by a number of Preventive Men was in charge of the "Harpy." At about 3-30 p.m. the Duke of Connaught arrived, passed down the Brow and embarked on the Trinity