

Mr. McCullagh, P.O. (Gorraghwood) has been obliged on doctor's orders to have an enforced convalescence; we wish him a complete recovery and look forward to his being back again on the strength soon.

News of mobile rummage activity includes owned seizures of 1 1/6th galls. spirits at Londonderry; a quantity of matches at Larne and 2 lbs. tobacco at Bangor. Whilst, admittedly, these are in themselves comparatively trifling, it is commented on as an indication that the seafaring community who chance to visit these "outports" are not slow to take advantage of any shortcomings in our most effective means of revenue control—rummage. With the staff now augmented by the two A.P.O.s from Derry (replaced, incidentally, by C.P.M.s) and a new member, it is anticipated that soon Belfast may be able to muster a permanent mobile rummage crew.

W.A.A.

## CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor, "The Customs Journal."  
Sir,

Your correspondent "Per Ardua Ad Astra" (May issue, "C.J.") appears to be one of the "war weary" individuals who have come back to the Waterguard, expecting Utopia and, on finding things not to his satisfaction, starts off with a long epistle, slating "the job." Supervising Officers, P.S.A. Officials, and Senior P.O.s.

"Per Ardua la disaster" seems to forget that he "contracted" to serve in any port or place in the United Kingdom when he joined the Department, and that a large number of above officers are also ex-Service men of the 1914-18 War, who have all suffered at times from "Watergaurditis," as he is suffering.

Criticism must at all times be constructive, and during my twenty-seven years' service, I have yet to meet the Supervising Officer, P.S.A. Official, or Senior P.O. who would not go out of his way, when approached in the proper manner, to help and advise any colleague of any grade.

So "think before you ink." "Per Ardua ad Astra," be patient, and take heart, as we are all living these days for one purpose—to see what is going to happen next!

J. DENBY  
(otherwise "Dynam.")

## LIVERPOOL OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

The M.D. and H.B. have now offered to provide a Nissen hut on the Princes Parade Cattle Staithes site to accommodate the Waterguard staff at the Princes Landing Stage, and discussions are already taking place to meet the question of planning the internal lay-out of the hut.

Close consultations with the local representatives of the Federation have now commenced with the hope that, through a coalescence of ideas, mutually advantageous proposals for new offices to accommodate the Customs staffs in the Langton and Canada dock areas will emerge. Meanwhile, the question of improving the existing accommodation deficiencies is being actively pursued through Whitley channels.

Rumours of a new development at Bromboro' Dock give freshness to the hope that the admirable building for which we have waited so long will soon be available for our exclusive use.

F.H.

## C. and E. ANNUAL SPORTS

Once again, for the first time since 1939, the Annual Department Sports Meeting is to be revived at the C.S. Ground, Chiswick. The meeting is at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 8th July. ♦

Most of the pre-war events again appear in the programme. The old and the young are catered for, and for the more serious competitors there is a selection of handicap and championship events. Among the championships to be decided are the 100 yards for the Controlling Grade Challenge Cup, and the Tug-of-War for the Chief Preventive Officers Challenge Cup.

Full details are given on the combined handbill/entry forms which have been distributed throughout the Department in London. Entry forms must reach R. C. Jarvis, Librarian, City Gate House, not later than 23rd June.

All those interested in the above, will you please contact me at Victoria Dock, I have forms of entry. Six are required for the tug-of-war team; also sprinters and distances up to a mile.

R. A. STOCKER, P.O.,  
Athletic Secretary.

# SPIRITS

By H.E.P.B.

## The Limit of Departmental Interest.

A reference to any English dictionary will reveal that the word "spirit" is accorded many meanings. It would, therefore, be wise at the outset to heed Dr. C. E. M. Joad's "it all depends what you mean by . . ."

The word "spirit" is derived from the Latin spiritus (from spirare), originally meaning the wind in motion, breath, the soul, and so became identified with that which gives life or energy to the human body, the machine or any other object.

The term "spirits" as used in this department is intended to mean alcohol and preparations of alcohol of certain kinds; but, since there are so many series of alcohols used in chemical science, it is necessary to define the term further. And since we are principally concerned with spirits occurring in Part VI of the Tariff, it is intended to deal with them only within that range.

At the present time and in general terms these spirits may be said to be (a) the products derived from the distillation of saccharine liquids which have undergone alcohol fermentation, and (b) to a distillate of wood.

Under Part VI of the Tariff, then, we are interested only in the two simplest members of one of the series of alcohols (the group of so-called Monohydric aliphatic alcohols), viz., Methyl Alcohol ( $\text{CH}_3\text{OH}$ ) and Ethyl Alcohol ( $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ ). As far as is known at present these are the only alcohols possessing intoxicant as opposed to narcotic properties.

In the nomenclature of the alcohols the forms "ethylic," "methylic," etc., have now been discarded in favour of "ethyl," "methyl," etc. There is also developing a use of chemical names with the termination -ol to denote the different alcohols. For example, "ethanol" is ethyl alcohol, "methanol" is methyl alcohol, and so on.

According to revenue law the range of spirit duty is limited to: Any fermented liquor containing a greater proportion than 40 per cent. of proof spirit. Spirits of any description including all liquors mixed with spirits and all mixtures, compounds and preparations mixed with spirits, and including methyl alcohol so purified so as to be potable.

It will be seen, then, that the legal term embraces more than the general term in that there is included any fermented liquor containing more than 40 per cent. of proof spirit. When it is understood that a degree in regard to wine strength is 1 per cent. of proof spirit, the student may be nonplussed to find tariff wine ratings up to 42 degrees and over. This is an indulgence, possibly because it is sometimes necessary to so fortify certain wines for their preservation or improvement, especially where they have to undergo a sea journey. There is, however, a limit to this indulgence and a strict control is kept to prevent its abuse, as may be seen, for example, in C.C. 2-9-28, which instructs: "If wine, whether in cask or bottle, is found to contain 45 degrees and upwards of proof spirit, samples are to be drawn and forwarded to the Board, the goods being placed under stop pending the Board's decision."

## Methyl Alcohol

Methyl Alcohol (also known as Wood Naphtha or Methanol) is a distillate of wood and is prepared by the process known as dry or destructive distillation. The wood, usually beech, is cut up and piled with its faggots, shavings or other combustible material, fired, enclosed or banked with earth, and left to consume itself. The products of combustion are, briefly, wood-tar and charcoal, the former of which is purified from the more solid tarry matter, then repeatedly distilled until spirit more or less crude, oily and foul smelling is produced. This crude spirit (or Naphtha) has a market without being further purified, but the quality usually imported for methylation is rectified free from oiliness and is a perfectly clear liquid. Even then it ordinarily retains the pungent and disagreeable smell peculiar to it, and it is only when it has been subjected to a special treatment of deodorising and rectification from potash, etc., that the distinguishing odour largely, but not quite, disappears.

The production of Methyl Alcohol by the destructive distillation of wood has, however, proved a comparatively expensive process, and research has successfully sought a cheaper source of supply. At the present time it is manufactured synthetically on a very large scale in this country and abroad.

In its pure state Methyl Alcohol is a

mobile, colourless liquid with a faint spiritous odour, burns with a pale blue flame, and is miscible with water in all proportions, with ethyl alcohol and with ether.

Methyl Alcohol is of revenue interest when it has been purified so as to be potable, for only then does it become chargeable with spirit duty, and persons who produce such potable spirit are deemed distillers.

An examination of spirits in Part VI of the Tariff will show, as stated in the previous paragraph, that the rating for Methyl Alcohol is limited to that which has been purified so as to be potable. It should be noted, however, that the word "potable" is to be interpreted as an absence of nauseousness and not to freedom from poisonous properties.

This spirit, whether purified or not, is considered to be poisonous, and by the Spirits Act, 1880, Section 130(1) (as amended by the Revenue Act, 1898, Section 14 (3)), it is prohibited to be used as a beverage or internally as a medicine. Its only legitimate uses are for industrial or scientific purposes, and, as provided by the Finance Act, 1902, Section 8, may be authorised to be received free of duty for use in an art or manufacture where methylated spirits would be unsuitable or detrimental.

At certain times Methyl Alcohol has appeared in the market as a beverage, made up to imitate ordinary potable spirits. Periods when there has been a prohibition in the use of alcoholic liquor (as at one time in the U.S.A.), or when, by reason of increases of duty and/or lack of supply of well-known and controlled supplies as during and since the war) have seen the unscrupulous persons practise this nefarious trade.

This spirit, it is reported, can cause blindness in 24 hours and kill in two days. Even so, such traffic found many who were willing to engage in it. The following record of a few Press reports will show the truth of this statement:—**28.4.42—"Hootch" Kills in Four Days.**

Hootch—delayed action drink made from wood alcohol—has killed ten people in Glasgow area since Saturday. Three were women. Six more people are in hospital seriously ill. Police have found the source of the poison fountain to be three defective drums of methanol left behind by a ship, and have seized what is left.

#### 14.5.42—**Nearly Died of Hotel "Hootch."**

"Hootch" (wood alcohol) is, according to Lord Teviot, being sold under the guise of whisky in some of the best London hotels, and poisoning people.

He made this allegation in the House of Lords yesterday and said: "Friends of mine in a very eminent hotel in London have just escaped death through very abstemious drinking."

#### 23.9.42—**Wine was Blinding, Deadly.**

Over 3,000 gallons of wine were alleged at Old Street Police Court yesterday to have contained so much methyl alcohol that, even if taken in small quantities, it could have caused blindness, unconsciousness and death.

Prosecuting counsel, Mr. P. C. R. Noble, said the wine was "so highly dangerous" that the premises where it was kept had to be locked up until it could be destroyed. The Magistrate, imposing fines totalling £1,190 and two prison sentences, said that but for the vigilance of somebody the mixture would have been sold and consumed with disastrous consequences.

#### 8.2.47.

Five United States naval ratings died and five others are seriously ill as a result of drinking wood alcohol at a party aboard U.S.S. "Latimer" at Norfolk, Virginia.

Methyl Alcohol should not be confused with methylated spirits, which is ethyl alcohol plus certain denaturants (added by licensed methylators), and, when imported, liable to duty as unenumerated spirits (see C.C. 2-10-98 and Tariff Notes on Spirits Duties, para. 4).

*The series of articles on spirits will run under the following headings:—*

- (2) *Methyl Alcohol*
- (3) *Ethyl Alcohol.*
- (4) *Proof Spirit.*
- (5) *Sikes's Hydrometer.*
- (6) *Obscuration.*
- (7) *The Tariff Groups.*
- (8) *Application of Instructions.*

—ED.

## THE DOCUMENTS IN THE CASE

(concluding "Whitleyism and All That")

All members of the Preventive Service should know something of Whitleyism and those who have been through the W.I.C. (Waterguard Training Centre to you—but isn't the word "Waterguard" one now quite out of date, here or elsewhere?) do know something. Obviously the subject can't be thrashed out for ever. It seems to the writer that no more need now be done than to carry out an earlier promise, that is to list a helpful course of reading to supplement this JOURNAL series (Feb., 1945, March, '45, May, '46, June, '46, July, '46, March, '47). This can serve as the also-promised summing-up of the whole series, though one cannot forget the many omissions and points undeveloped. Too late now!

If, therefore, you want to know more, read:—

- (1) Establishment Instructions, Vol. 5. I. Whitley Council and Suggestions Committee. If there is no office copy, see that one is obtained.
- (2) Current articles in the Federation JOURNAL. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.
- (3) The essay "The Whitley Method and How it Works" by the Staff Side Chairman, from a talk given on 20th July, 1944. A copy can be obtained from:—Staff Side Office, Orchard Street, London, S.W.1. Printed in WHITLEY BULLETIN, October, 1944: quoted at length in THE WHIP, November, 1944. See also below.
- (4) Royal Commission on the Civil Service 1929-31 Report (Published 1931). From H.M. Stationery Office, 3/6. Chapter XIII—Machinery of Negotiation.
- (5) Summary of (4) in C.S. Compendium 1936, Section 3. Price 2/6. Published at 2, Upper Belgrave Street, London, S.W.1. Probably out of print, but possessed by many P.S.A. officers.
- (6) Same commentary in The Professional Civil Servant's Handbook, 1944. Published by the Institute of Professional Civil Servants, 17, Hans Place, London, S.W.1. Price 3/9. Post free.

- (7) Civil Service Staff Relationships, by E. N. Gladden, M.Sc. (Econ.), Ph.D. (London) with a foreword by Sir Horace Wilson. Published by Wm. Hodge and Co., Ltd., 12/6. Administrative Research Series. This book was reviewed in the JOURNAL, April, 1944, and quoted at length then and in November, 1944
- (8) Whitley Councils in the British Civil Service, by L. D. White, Ph.D., 1932. Difficult to obtain. The standard work.
- (9) Les Syndicats de Fonctionnaires en Angleterre, by Bernard Leger, 1928. (If you get through this you've earned your special language allowance).
- (10) So Far, by W. J. Brown. Published Allen and Unwin, 1945. In most libraries.
- (11) Three Generations, by Hilda Martindale. The official side viewpoint.
- (12) Back numbers of THE WHIP and other C.S. Publications and of WHITLEY BULLETIN (Good summary c. July, 1945 in latter, by G. S. Bunting). See also CUSTOMS JOURNAL: "This Whitley," c. 1935, December, 1925: Article by A. C. Booth, March, 1946, "How to Run Your Meetings," April—Sept., 1944.

You may take as much notice of all this as you have done the notices about Further Education, yet if only one of you takes up this vital but intricate subject which so closely governs the conditions of our livelihood, some hours of work by the present writer will have been well worth while.

From Gladden's book:—

"In common with the black-coated worker everywhere, the Civil Servant considered it *infra dig.* to combine for defence and to agitate for improved conditions.... He failed to realise that his own standards were moulded by movements and conditions similar to those of the manual labourer. This sense of being above the battle and subject to a special set of laws, almost divine in their operation, is still held in certain high-placed areas of the service and tends to produce the paternalistic attitude which continues to persist even if it is no longer a vigorous emanation."

"The Official Side has need for an informal organisation, its members