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Waterguard Re-organisation.

The 1912 re-organisation scheme recognised that the old Customs system under which the local Collectors of Customs exercised their general control over the Customs Waterguard by means of non-waterguard as well as waterguard supervising officers was defective, and in view of the amalgamation of the Customs and Excise was likely to become more so with the growth of the non-waterguard work of the joint Department. That scheme, therefore, took a step in the direction of separating the Waterguard from the non-waterguard service. The present scheme makes the separation complete. Experience has shown that the overlapping of the two branches is unsatisfactory. The non-waterguard Officers have no waterguard training and experience, and the great increase of their own work has left them no time to give effective attention to the Waterguard. The Collectors themselves are too busy to do more than exercise a general control, and it is not their function to do more. The result is that considerably more responsibility has been devolved upon the Waterguard Chief Preventive Officers and Preventive Officers than is justified by their status and pay, and this has led them to put in a claim for a much greater increase of pay than is justified by their work, as contemplated in the existing scheme of organisation.

The proposed new organisation of the Waterguard is based on the division of the work into three grades, corresponding to the grading of the Customs and Excise Outdoor Service, viz: Rank and File, Supervising and Controlling :

(1) The Rank and File consists of the class of Preventive Officers with the class of Assistant Preventive Officers. The Preventive Officer is the operative unit, and the Assistant Preventive Officers work as his assistants.

(2) The Supervising Grade consists of the class of Waterguard Surveyors and the class of Chief Preventive Officers (who are in effect the assistants of the Surveyors). For geographical reasons (the Waterguard Service being stretched out along the coastline and the waterside of estuaries) it is necessary to sub-divide and partially delegate the supervision. The Chief Preventive Officer must be on the spot (the station) for the reason, amongst others, that certain individual duties fall to him - consequently his area of work is limited. The Surveyor will take a much larger area (district) and will be a peripatetic officer within the limits of his area.

(3) Waterguard Superintendents will be the Controlling Officers directly responsible to the respective Collectors of Customs and Excise for the Waterguard work and its staff in their divisions. They are in effect Assistant Collectors for Waterguard purposes. The two 1st Class Superintendents are in the largest Ports, London and Liverpool.

Custom House, E.C.

25th April, 1921.

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