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by Sir John Inskip

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Head Office of the Association :

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Sir JOHN H. INSKIP, K.B.E., Solicitor and General Secretary

to whom all communications are to be addressed.

SIR JOHN INSKIP'S

REVIEW OF EVENTS.

IT will be gathered from this report that I have been heavily engaged during the past three months on pilotage matters, many of which are of considerable interest and importance. Once again I have to report that there has been no request from any port to the Executive Committee to meet to discuss any particular problem, and it is still more than doubtful that it would be possible to get a representative meeting of the Committee I am, however, from time to time in touch with different members of the Executive Committee and Mr. Webb is kept closely informed on every matter which should be brought to his notice.

As on previous occasions I have refrained from dealing with matters which are of local interest only, and the pilots at many ports when they read this report will notice that matters which I have been dealing with for them are not mentioned, but it is for that reason alone. The purpose of these reports is to keep members informed as closely as possible of the activities of this Association and they save, I think, correspondence on many questions which are answered in advance.

Insurance of Pilot Boats.

The Ministry of War Transport have intimated that H.M. Government have decided that the facilities previously granted for the insurance of pilot boats against war risks shall continue to be available for the duration of the war. Hitherto the present arrangement has had to be renewed from time to time.

London Pilots' Benefit Fund.

This important matter continues to receive careful consideration, and since my last report there has been a meeting at the Ministry of War Transport attended by representatives of the London and Outport Districts and also representatives from Trinity House. The difficulty confronting the Elder Brethren is to maintain the present benefits out of the depleted income consequent upon war conditions, and the London pilots have volunteered an increase in their contribution to the fund. This, however, alone is not sufficient and the suggestion has been made that a special rate might be levied for a limited period to be paid direct to the Benefit Fund.

Humber.

A curious situation has arisen at this port following the decision of the Humber Pilotage Authority to sanction the employment of unlicensed men to perform pilotage duties within the Humber Pilotage District. This is a revolutionary proposal which is a breach of the provisions of the Pilotage Act, and is one which could not operate without the agreement of the Humber pilots who would be entitled to supersede any unlicensed man piloting within the limits of the District. The pilots maintain that if additional pilots are wanted the usual war-time procedure of issuing temporary licenses should be followed, and they are not prepared to lend themselves to any proposal which is ultra vires the Pilotage Act. Representations have been made to the Authority on the matter.

Income Tax—Allowance to Meet Additional Expenses.

This matter is under consideration and the last communication I received from H.M. Inspector of Taxes was to the effect that the question of tax liability in respect of pilots' remuneration and of their expenses is an involved one and is still under consideration.

It will be understood that this is a question affecting only pilots who have been compulsorily transferred to another district to meet the war emergency.

Fire Watching.

Following my reference to this matter in my last report I received enquiries from two or three ports, and the matter became one of urgency owing to the fact that in one case at least the pilots received notice to fire watch on business premises. Further urgent representations were made to the Ministry of War Transport for an immediate decision from the Ministry of Home Security, who had had the matter under consideration for the last four months.

I have now heard from the Ministry of War Transport that the Ministry of Home Security are understood to have accepted in principle the exemption of licensed pilots from the scope of the Civil Defence Duties Compulsory Enrolment Order, 1941. Presumably the necessary directions will be given to all Civil Defence regional Officials in coastal and tidal areas.

Compensation for War Injuries.

Following a reference to this matter in previous reports, I have again been in communication with the Ministry of Pensions in consequence of various cases which have been put to me from time to time. I have already reported the ruling of the Ministry that the War Pensions and Detention Allowances Merchantile Marine etc. Scheme applies only to pilots who in the course of their duties proceed

to sea, but this ruling left certain cases in doubt and it is to these cases that I have had to call the attention of the Ministry.

It will be sufficient for the information of the members if I set out the letter which I received from the Ministry of Pensions dated the 25th November, 1941 which reads as follows:—

Sir,

With reference to your letter JHI/DD dated the 13th November, 1941, I am directed by the Minister of Pensions to inform you that the Minister of Pensions regards the powers conferred upon him by the Pensions (Navy, Army, Air Force and Merchantile Marine) Act 1939, as adequate, broadly speaking, to justify awards in the cases of all pilots who are at sea pursuant to their duties as pilots. Accordingly, if a pilot has gone on board a ship for the purpose of taking her out of port, the Minister would not consider that purpose was altered by the fact that, after reaching the limits of his pilotage district, the pilot remained on board)

(1) in order to pilot the ship to the limits of another pilotage district; or

(2) in connection with gun, engine, or other trials outside the limits of his pilotage district; or

(3) in order to anchor the ship and stay on board until such time as her convoy arrives.

With regard to the penultimate paragraph of your letter, it is thought that the cover under the Scheme for pilots and mariners is identical so far as the different nature of their respective occupations permits. In particular it is to be remembered that the mariner, like the pilot, is only covered if he is engaged in sea-going service.

I am, etc.

Pilots Uniform and Coupons.

This matter has continued to receive my attention and I am now awaiting an assurance from the Board of Trade that a proposal which has been submitted to Trinity House so far as their pilots are concerned will be applicable to all ports. I think that this assurance will certainly be forthcoming.

Without setting out the proposal in detail, because I am not aware that it has been finally accepted by the Elder Brethren, the effect of it is that a pilot will be entitled to receive annually in exchange for 18 clothing coupons the value of 50 coupons, which will enable them to purchase every year, two years or three years, according to the article of clothing in question, sufficient for their purposes. The articles of clothing comprise—

Jacket and Waistcoat (Every 2 years)
Trousers (Every year)
Boots (Every year)
Greatcoat (Every 3 years)
Oilskin (Every 2 years)
Sea Boots (Every year)

Ration Books.

Since my last report I have heard from one or two ports, but this question does not seem to be a very important one from the pilots' point of view. I have been asked whether the pilots are entitled to the Seamen's Identity Card and I think that the answer to this question must be in the negative. It is quite clear that a pilot is not entitled to receive a Seamen's Ration Book, and in the few cases where these books have been issued to pilots they were, I understand, withdrawn on January 24th.

Firth of Forth.

Following on Item 10 in my last report a communication has now been received from the Ministry of War Transport stating that following consideration of this matter by the Admiralty, the Commander-in-Chief, Rosyth has now revoked the Order to which objection was taken. It will be remembered that this Order purported to impose a limitation on the size of vessels which might be piloted by newly licensed pilots in the Firth of Forth District, and this Association submitted that he did not possess the power.

Two more matters upon which I have had protracted correspondence and which might be mentioned here are (1) pooling and (2) Pilots' Benefit Fund.

The pooling arrangement in the Firth of Forth is of necessity a complicated one and there seems to be some difference of opinion at the moment between the pilots of the various Districts and the Forth Trinity House. This matter is not perhaps of general interest, but one point arising from this discussion may be mentioned and that is that in all questions affecting pooling of pilots' earnings the pilots themselves are the last court of appeal because a pooling system can only operate where a substantial majority of the pilots concerned are in agreement with it.

With regard to (2), there has been for many years a desire to have a reasonable Benefit Fund on the Firth of Forth, but here again the question is a complex one. I am now in direct communication with the Forth Pilotage Authority and am hoping that a meeting may be arranged in London at an early date.

The pilots of the various Districts appear to be in agreement, and it only remains to agree certain major principles with the Forth Trinity House and the Pilotage Authorities of the var-

ious Districts in the Firth of Forth. If this Association can do anything to help in forming a really satisfactory Benefit Fund for all the Firth of Forth pilots, no effort will be spared in this direction.

Poundage on Salvage Awards.

The Pilotage Authority at one port has called upon a pilot to pay poundage on the amount of a salvage award, and the pilot has asked me to advise him as to his position. My advice is that poundage is payable by a pilot only on money earned for pilotage services and for nothing else, and that as a salvage service is something quite distinct and apart from a pilotage service, no poundage can be demanded on salvage money.

Dundee.

Various matters have continued to engage my attention under the following heads:—

(a) New bye-laws in reference to Landing and Boarding Charges.

(b) An Order of the Naval Officer In Charge purporting to vary certain pilotage rates laid down in the schedule to the bye-laws.

(c) New bye-laws in reference to Sick Benefit.

With regard to (a), the pilots have had to question the propriety of having the Boarding and landing charges levied on a gross tonnage basis whilst the pilotage dues remain on a net tonnage basis, but if gross tonnage is desirable as a basis in one case, it should be so regarded in the other, quite apart from the undesirability of having two separate bases in operation at one port.

With regard to (b), it will be remembered that the Order in question was ruled *ultra vires* by the Admiralty, but nevertheless the Dundee Pilotage Authority have apparently been observing the reduced rates which the illegal Order purported to make. I have advised the pilots that they should insist upon payment of the schedule rates and, if necessary, take a case to court to enforce their claim.

It is now understood that the Admiralty have under consideration the making of another Order, but for what purpose I do not at present know. The draft Order will be issued in the course of the next few days. This is one more case of confusion arising from the handling by the Admiralty of pilotage matters without apparently previous consultation with the Ministry of War Transport. This particular case has caused endless trouble, not to mention financial loss to the pilots unless some means can be found of enforcing payment of the legal pilotage dues over the past period since the illegal rates have been in operation.

Dartmouth.

Various questions arising at this port have been engaging my attention, and as a result of a recent meeting held at Dartmouth the Elder Brethren have made an Order instituting certain new rates and increasing all rates by 50 per cent as from the 1st January. Whether or not the bulk of traffic at Dartmouth will be such as to provide, even with this increase, sufficient remuneration, remains to be seen, but the increase is to be reviewed if there is any appreciable variation in the trade of the port.

For the information especially of those ports whose recent applications for rate increases have been rejected, it may be stated that whilst it has been ruled that the services of four pilots must be retained at Dartmouth, the total gross earnings for November amounted to no more than £41, out of which £20 had to go to meet expenses.

Applications for Rate Increases.

Since my last report, applications from Swansea, Newport and Blyth have been rejected by the Ministry of War Transport. In each case the application was made by the Pilotage Authority on a unanimous vote. For the enlightenment of pilots at other ports, it ought to be stated, perhaps, that in each case the current earnings were in excess of the average earnings for the three pre-war years, and probably this was a deciding factor in the mind of the Ministry. There are, however, grounds for thinking that if the applications had been framed in another way an increase might have been granted, because one of the points stressed in the applications was the financial position of the pilot cutters, owned as they are in the case of Newport and Swansea by the pilots and not by the Authority. I met representatives of the Newport pilots at Newport on the 26th January to discuss this particular point, and at the moment I am waiting to hear further from Swansea, who are apparently seriously concerned with regard to the financial position of their cutter company.

One lesson which may perhaps be learned from this experience is the possible desirability of pilots consulting the Association with regard to applications for a rate increase at an earlier stage even when they have the unanimous support of the Pilotage Authority. It has to be borne in mind that the position today under war-time conditions, so far as rates are concerned, is very different from what it is in normal times.

Various other ports are in communication with me with a view to an application for a rate increase, and wherever it is found that a reasonable case can be

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INDISCREET LETTERS.

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Admiralty Points Moral of Lost Merchantman.

Relatives and friends can do much harm by encouraging merchant navy officers and men to write letters in regard to their voyages and particulars of the ports they may visit. The following story issued to the press by the Admiralty helps to emphasize this danger.

A large new merchant ship of a type much needed for important national purposes was recently lost with all on board except two men. About two months before her loss a letter was intercepted by the censor which contained thinly disguised information about the prospective movements of the ship, and disclosed the existence of a code for place names arranged between the writer and the addressee. A month later the writer sent a letter to another correspondent in which he named and described the port in the vicinity of which the vessel was subsequently destroyed by enemy action with the loss of life already stated.

While both these letters were intercepted by the censor, the possibility cannot be ignored that other letters containing similar information may have been captured by the enemy or, in some other way, may have escaped censorship, and may have been the cause of the loss of the vessel with so many valuable lives.

THE QUICKENING TEMPO

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On a tour of shipyards in the north-east of England recently Mr. Noel Baker, Joint Parliamentary Secretary, to the Ministry of War Transport, saw merchant ships under construction which give primary consideration to defence and to improved accommodation for crews. He said that everywhere he noticed the quickening tempo of ship construction and both ashore and aboard a growing realisation of the need to improve the lot of all merchant seamen. Slum conditions in ships would be abolished.

At one yard he saw women working alongside men on the ship and in the shops.

Continued from previous column.

made out the pilots will have the support of this Association.

The increase of 33½ per cent granted to the Goole pilots some little time ago is to remain operative for a further period but is to be reviewed not later than April 1st 1942.

MERCHANT NAVY'S FUTURE.

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Minister of War Transport's Request to Maritime Board.

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"Each month as the war goes on we shall strive more and more to secure better terms for the people at sea and to improve their lot."

With these words spoken with obvious emotion, Lord Leathers, Minister of War Transport brought to a close a discussion in the House of Lords on February 3rd following a question by Lord Marchwood, Master of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners, who asked whether the Government had course to any decision regarding a request for an impartial inquiry made in the Merchantile Marine debate of September 10th.

(In the November issue of "The Pilot" there was a reference to the earlier discussion when Lord Marchwood withdrew a motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission. The last line of the paragraph went adrift and with it the indication that he would raise the subject again. This second discussion was the fulfillment of that promise).

Lord Marchwood further asked what steps were being taken for planning in advance to meet the situation which would confront the shipping industry on the cessation of hostilities. Plans should be made to secure our merchant fleet would be in a position to provide for the officers and men the most favourable conditions of employment.

"Immediate Consideration."

Lord Leathers, said that he still adhered to the decision that he could not accept the request for the setting up now of a Royal Commission. While he was unable to commit the future, if Lord Marchwood raised the question again on the cessation of hostilities, the Government would then be in a position, in the light of the circumstances then prevailing, to give a definite decision as to the advisability of an inquiry covering the wider aspect of the whole future of our Merchant Navy. The Government realized to the full the importance and urgency of the problems and would plan in advance to meet them.

Continuity of employment, improvements in methods of entry and training of sea-going personnel, were matters in which among others, he had been in communication with the National Mari-

time Board. He had asked them to give immediate consideration to these problems and bring them to the stage of definite proposals as soon as possible. The aim of the Government would be to secure, so far as could be done, that after the war the British Mercantile Marine should be maintained in adequate strength and in a position of full efficiency, in which term he included the best attainable conditions of employment for the officers and men who were serving the country so well.

Gratitude for the Undertakings.

Having heard the reply, Lord Marchwood, speaking for Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield, who had supported him in the debate in September, declared his gratitude for the undertakings Lord Leathers had given. He had hoped the Government would realise the importance of setting up a Royal Commission now.

Lord Mottistone understood from Lord Leathers's statement that he would take any administrative action which might be necessary to implement the findings of the National Maritime Board.

Lord Strabolgi said that the National Union of Seamen would read Lord Leathers's reply with satisfaction. They did not think that an inquiry would serve any useful purpose at present. In the first place, there could be no useful inquiry until the Government's policy had been decided; and, secondly, the union could not spare the men to take part. But British seamen would not be prepared to go back to pre-war conditions,

Large Subsidies Required.

The Earl of Cork and Orrey said that if we were to have a merchant marine worthy of the nation, and if it were too have the generous terms the country wished it to have, that would require large subsidies from the Government, and the only possible committee that could decide how to apportion the expenses between the shipping industry and the national Exchequer must be a strong and impartial body.

He also claimed that Lord Chatfield had been misrepresented in his advocacy of uniforms for the Merchant Navy in the September debate, remarking that he had only touched on the subject. "But," added Lord Cork, "there are men—plenty of men—in the Merchant Navy who would like to have uniforms."

MARITIME COURTS.

Maritime courts have been set up in this country for some of those Allied Governments whose headquarters are temporarily here. The latest of these is the Belgium, established this month.

Obituary.

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Hull Pilot Cutter Captain.

The death has occurred at his home of Capt. Frank P. Jones, only son of Mrs. F. W. Jones, Ferriby.

Capt. Jones, who was 48, was captain of the pilot cutter J. H. Fisher. An old Conway and Hull Grammar School boy, he served in the last war and held the rank of Lt.-Commander, R.D., R.N.R., at the time of his death. He left a widow and two daughters.

THE VANGUARD.

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Ocean Vanguard, first of 60 ships contracted for by the British Government with American builders, and Fort Ville Marie, first of a fleet being built in Canadian yards, arrived at ports in England within a few days of one another early this month.

The keel of the Ocean Vanguard was laid on April 14th, 1941 at Richmond, California, which was then little more than a mud flat. She was launched on Aug. 16th and delivered on Oct. 27th. She is a welded ship and among those who built her were men from Clydeside, Tyneside, and the Humber who went abroad in search of work during the period of depression at home some years ago.

The Fort Ville Marie was built at Montreal, the keel being laid soon after that of the Ocean Vanguard and she was launched on October 10th. The crew of 47 was sent to Montreal from the Ministry of War Transport to bring her over.

Three more have already been launched from Canadian yards and three others are on the stocks.

LIFE-SAVING EQUIPMENT.

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Exhibitions of life-saving equipment, arranged by the Ministry of War Transport, have been held recently in London, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Hull, Southampton, Cardiff, Liverpool, Glasgow and Belfast.

Most of the exhibits were for the safety of seamen when forced to abandon ship, but there were other appliances which might obviate the need of that. They included portable emergency fire fighting equipment to enable water to be drawn from the sea in the event of the ship's watermain being damaged, and emergency lighting arrangements.

TWENTY YEARS AGO.

There was an issue of *The Pilot* in February 1922; Number 2 of the second volume. Although little more than three years had passed since the armistice in the Great War there was scarcely any reference to the conflict. The Tyne occupied a prominent position and the late Amos L. Ayre, a member of the Executive of that time and father of the present member, Stanley J., contributed an article on "Watch Your Bye-laws." Some of his words are as true to-day as ever:

"It is the duty of every pilot to support the United Kingdom Pilots' Association, which, through its Executive is doing yeoman service on behalf of the pilots of these islands."

There had been an Inquiry at Newcastle in December 1921 regarding the Tyne, Tees and Wear Pilotage Orders. It lasted three days and at the January Executive meeting, report fully in that early magazine, Mr. J. M. Holland, who with the General Secretary (Mr. Joseph Browne) had attended the Inquiry, reported that the principal and most contentious subject was that of making the Tyne District a compulsory area, adding "It will be seen by the weight of the opposition that the shipowners left nothing to chance." Although there was a strong note of optimism at the meeting later events did not turn out as hoped.

At the last Conference on the Tyne in the summer before the present war, the same subject was still an outstanding topic.

THE KING'S GREETINGS TO THE MERCHANT NAVY.

"After more than two and a quarter years of war the flag of the British Merchant Navy and fishing fleets still flies as proudly as ever far and wide over the Severn Seas. Your fellow countrymen know what all of you have endured to keep it so, and as the all-important cargoes arrive in an unending stream so do their gratitude and admiration grow.

The King.

JUST SEA.

"Have you ever crossed the Pacific?" the Commodore of a merchant convoy asked a pressman who was questioning him about surface raiders in that ocean.

"No" was the answer.

"I have" said the commodore. "You never see a ship from one year's end to another. I did three years in New Zealand, and only once did I see a ship when I was at sea and she was making for Suva — the same as I was."

The Last Column

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New Knight.—The Director of Coasting and Short Sea Shipping, Ministry of War Transport, Capt. Sir John Fisher, received his knighthood in the New Year honours.

Tobruk's Defender.—Major General Sir Leslie Morshhead who commanded the troops in the historic defence of Tobruk was formerly branch manager at Sydney of the Orient Line.

Liner Division.—Sir William Currie, the Chairman of the P. & O. has succeeded Mr. T. Harrison Hughes as head of the Liner Division in the Ministry of War Transport. Mr. Hughes had held the position since November 1939 and resigned in order to return to his own business.

Ships' Speeds.—"One 15 to 16 knot vessel is worth two emergency ships of 8 or 9 knots and the faster ship does not call for double the constructive effort of the slower ship. That applies equally to the war-time period and to peace conditions"—Lord Rotherwick, President of the Chamber of Shipping in "Fairplay."

Hitler's Blunder.—"Hitler thought that victory was his, the Merchant Navy was to be annihilated, the people starved, the courage of the British race by-passed. That did not happen, because Hitler was a landsman, totally unable to calculate the fortitude and heroism of British seamen."—Admiral of the Fleet, Lord Chatfield, in a broadcast.

King Haakon VII.—In a northern yard on 19th December, 1941, the first ship built in this country for Norway since the outbreak of war was launched. The new vessel, a Diesel-engined cargo ship of 7,000 tons was named King Haakon VII by Mrs. Arne Sunde, wife of the Norwegian Minister of Supply and Shipping. King Haakon attended the ceremony.

Padded History.—Scribbling pads made up from old papers from the archives of the former Marine Department of the Board of Trade are being used by the staff of the Ministry of War Transport. Some of them go back half a century and contain reports of long-forgotten ships. Maybe there are interesting sidelights on pilotage history among them.

Shipping Adjustment.—A Combined Shipping Adjustment Board is one of three bodies agreed between the Prime Minister and the President of the United States. In Washington Sir Arthur Salter, one of the Parliamentary Secretaries of the Ministry of War Transport and formerly of the Ministry of Shipping, will represent the United Kingdom. In London the representative will be Lord Leathers, Ministry of War Transport.

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