



The Pilot

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THE PILOT was last issued about three months ago and contained the announcement that the Ministry of Transport had called a meeting of all interested parties to discuss the question of the level of pilots' earnings and what further action should be taken. The meeting was held at the Ministry on November 28th, 1950, and what transpired was fully discussed at a meeting of the Executive Committee held on board the *Wellington*, the headquarters of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners, on December 7th, 1950. This issue contains a lengthy report of the Executive meeting embodying an account of the proceedings at the Ministry. On February 20th, 1951, the sub-committee of the Executive met representatives of the Union pilots from Liverpool, the Firth of Forth, Bristol, Newport and Manchester at Transport House. After a lengthy discussion it was resolved that the negotiations should be re-opened by a meeting with the Chamber of Shipping at which the Association should be represented by Sir John Inskip and Mr. Griffiths and the Transport and General Workers' Union by Mr. A. Bird. It was thought that this might facilitate pending discussions, and a further meeting of the joint committee of pilots' representatives would be called to receive a report as soon as possible. It is hoped that the meeting with the Chamber of Shipping will be arranged for an early date. The Executive meet again on March 14th.

The Conference

In this Festival of Britain year accommodation in London is likely to be severely taxed, so to give members an early opportunity of making hotel bookings and other arrangements the Executive at their December meeting decided to fix the Conference for Wednesday, July 4th and Thursday, July 5th with the customary eve of Conference meeting of the Executive Committee on July 3rd, at 4 p.m.

The meetings will be held on board the *Wellington* which is berthed close to Temple Station on the Underground. Delegates who found accommodation in the Holborn neighbourhood for Conferences, first at the Holborn Restaurant and then at the Bonnington will find that the same quarters are still within a reasonable distance of the meeting place. Incidentally the *Wellington* takes us back quite close to the site of Anderton's Hotel in Fleet Street where our London meetings were held for so many years.

A Wrong Impression

Some remark by the Secretary at the Conference in the course of the discussion on pilots' earnings seems to have created the impression in the minds of some pilots that he was of the opinion that no pilot should earn more than £1,000 a year.

Sir John wishes to make it known that nothing was further from his mind than to make any such suggestion, and he does not know why, if that was the general impression by Conference, he was not challenged at the time by a single member. If he had been the matter could have been cleared up on the spot.

Decorated by Queen Juliana

Mr. Douglas Magub, senior Cinque Ports pilot, who piloted the *Jacob van Maskirk* in which the Queen of the Netherlands travelled when she paid her official visit to the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace last November, was given the honour of Officer of the Oranje-Nassau. The decoration was presented to him on board the vessel at Rotterdam. In the New Year Honours List of 1950, Mr. Magub received the O.B.E. He retired from the pilotage service last month.

THE MEETING AT THE MINISTRY

THE principal item on the agenda at the meeting of the Executive Committee on December 7th was "Report on developments since the last Executive Committee meeting with regard to the formula, including the meeting at the Ministry on November 28th."

The following were present at the Executive meeting: Messrs. Alex A. Love (in the chair), F. R. E. Goldsmith, H. B. Eagle, J. H. Innes, M. M. Marshall, C. E. Mock, H. G. Pead, D. H. Tate, G. S. Ward, J. T. Watson, H. G. Wynn and J. H. Barron (representing the small ports); Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Bernard C. Webb; General Secretary and Solicitor, Sir John H. Inskip, K.B.E., Assistant Secretary and Solicitor, Mr. C. D. Griffiths.

The Chairman first gave an account of the meeting at the Ministry. It was attended, he said, by the Parliamentary Committee of the U.K.P.A., representatives of the Chamber of Shipping at the highest level—Sir John Fisher, Mr. Gorrick (General Manager) and Mr. Greenwood—representatives of the Liverpool Pilots' Association, Mr. Bird of the Transport and General Workers Union with his Firth of Forth representatives, one from Bristol and one from Manchester.

Mr. Faulkner of the Ministry, who was in the chair said that although nothing had resulted from the earlier negotiations, he hoped they would not stop trying. He then called on Sir John Fisher, who said that the Chamber still thought the most obvious solution was the "master and mate" basis, but that would not be a rigid yardstick. The figures would be some guide for anyone who had to fix the earnings of a pilot in any port, but he did not say if they were nearer to the master or to the chief officer.

The Secretary was then called upon by Mr. Faulkner to say something and then Mr. Bird spoke for his people. An interesting discussion developed, various pilots joining in. The result was an agreement that they should get together again. Sir John Fisher was going abroad for a month or two. It was suggested that in the meantime they might have a conference with the Union pilots. In the course of the discussion at the Ministry it emerged that the Liverpool pilots did not favour the U.K.P.A.'s proposal nor did the Forth pilots. The Liverpool men wanted to play a lone hand; they got on very well with the Liverpool Steamshipowners' Association and did not want to be mixed up with any formulas or yardsticks. They were just a happy little family and that might be one reason for their not wanting to come back to the U.K.P.A.

"There was quite a bit of discussion later with regard to the 'master and mate' basis," continued Mr. Love. "We told Sir John Fisher we did not know what it amounted to and he tried to woo us over by saying 'Don't let us talk about master and mate.'"

Sir John Inskip reported that he had come up to London before the meeting to see Mr. Bird. "We had to avoid differences between the two bodies of pilots at the meeting," he explained, "and Mr. Bird did

not think that the 75 per cent proposal was acceptable to his people."

"It will clear the ground for discussion now if we can decide what we are going to do with that proposal. You are the Executive and you have to tell Conference that it would be wasting our time in view of recent developments if we pressed it. Even its strongest supporters have to admit that it was sprung on the Association near the end of the Conference without any notice and passed without very much debate."

Mr. Wynn: Did Sir John put forward the 75 per cent proposal?

The Chairman: No.

Mr. Wynn: What did Sir John put forward?

Sir John: The only proposal that could have been put forward was the one adopted at Conference. This was already well known to the Ministry and shipowners, and if maintained there would most certainly have drawn from the other pilots a dissenting statement.

MINISTRY AND THE FORMULA

The Chairman continuing his report on the Ministry meeting said that Mr. Faulkner made it perfectly clear that they were there not to discuss the thing in detail at all and that the meeting had been called to bring the shipowners and pilots together again because their previous talks had not found a solution of pilots' earnings. All the Ministry wanted and insisted on was that any scheme for the simplification of pilots' earnings must be agreed by the two parties and urged that further efforts to attain this should be carried on without delay. Mr. Faulkner also drew attention to the formula and said it was still in force. Pending any common sense agreement between the shipowners and pilots it would still be used by the Ministry, but he qualified that by saying that conditions had changed since it was put into use and the Ministry would try to strike a fair average between that formula and cases of post-war swollen earnings where there seemed to be a case for reduction, all factors being taken into consideration. In short, in the absence of agreement the Ministry must find a balance between inflated earnings and the formula.

Mr. Love added that the Ministry seemed inclined to take the three pre-war years' earnings and strike the average. That was provided that earnings were swollen, and it

was significant that the Ministry related present day earnings to pre-war earnings. At the close of the meeting Mr. Faulkner begged the shipowners and pilots to get together again as soon as possible and suggested that grading ports—three or four grades—and the fixing of a reasonable remuneration for each grade might be a starting point.

Reverting to Sir John Fisher's remarks at the meeting Mr. Love reported that Sir John said the shipowners understood and sympathised with the pilots as self-employed persons and piece workers. At the previous meeting the shipowners advocated the "master and mate" basis, but as this was not acceptable they were prepared to abandon that figure and comparison and let the pilots stand on their own legs. But, the shipowners submitted that a sea standard salary should be taken as a basis and would provide a fair basis for all ports, an agreed percentage to be added to this figure for different ports or grades of ports. An agreed margin—say 15 per cent—over or below would be allowable before any adjustment in rates should be considered. The shipowners said that although they might have abandoned "between master and mate" in theory they still suggested a chief officer's rate of pay as a basic figure.

THE PILOTS' POINT OF VIEW

The Chairman continued.

For the pilots Sir John Inskip agreed that no common ground had been found for agreement and gave as his opinion that no single formula would suit all ports. After listening to the shipowners' proposals he was bound to ask what they meant in terms of £ s. d. It was unfair that the shipowners should insist on the basic figure being the salary of an officer of the average ship using the port when the pilots had to possess qualifications to pilot the largest vessels. He also referred to the position of several small ports and to the question of manning and conditions of working.

Mr. Bird also spoke on manpower and manning and advocated the formation of a Pilotage Advisory Committee. The U.K.P.A. and the Union had agreed regarding the committee, but the Ministry did not take it up; they said the matter before them was urgent and it would take a considerable time to get the committee formed and functioning.

Mr. Goldsmith asked Sir John Fisher what percentage over pre-war earnings the pilots should get if the work were approximately the same. Although the question was repeated the shipowners still hedged on it.

Mr. Love having thus summarised the proceedings at the Ministry meeting, Mr. Tate said it should be pretty obvious to Mr. Wynn why the 75 per cent proposal was not put forward. Mr. Faulkner said they did not want any figures.

Sir John Inskip endeavoured to "set Mr. Wynn's mind at rest," but said it was very

difficult unless he grasped the atmosphere of the meeting. It was not called for the purpose of discussing this or that proposal, but one answer to Mr. Wynn was that their hands were tied by Conference. The U.K.P.A. committee had no authority to put forward any other proposal, and the proposed 75 per cent on rates held the field. The Ministry knew of the proposal, and he was perfectly sure that if they had attempted to advance arguments in support of it, all those arguments would have been washed out by a cold reception from the Liverpool pilots and the Union group. This was a case where silence was better. They all knew the Conference decision and he did not think Mr. Faulkner would have allowed them to advance it.

Mr. Wynn: No proposal was put forward?

Sir John: We did not advance arguments in support of the 75 per cent proposal. There were no arguments in support of any proposal.

POSITION OF SMALL PORTS

The Committee then adjourned for lunch and on re-assembling, the position of the small ports in this matter was referred to.

The Secretary said that although the total number of pilots involved might be small, about 25 ports came within the category. They had a problem of their own which was not going to interfere with any of the large ports. The Association was looking after their interests and they would have to be discussed quite separately at some time. It was a good thing to have their representative with them in these negotiations so that the small ports would see they were not being side-tracked or lost sight of.

Mr. Barron said the small ports would accept grading and the "between master and mate" proposal.

Sir John said that they must all try to march together.

Mr. Watson moved that in any further discussion on this matter, Mr. Barron should be included with the sub-committee.

This was seconded by Mr. Mock and agreed.

MR. TATE'S PROPOSAL

Mr. Tate: The Chamber are determined that the average level of pilots' earnings throughout the United Kingdom should be reduced and that pilots should work harder.

The Ministry want, for the purposes of administration, a neat scheme that will apply to all ports for the adjustment and the maintaining of pilots' earnings.

The pilots want, not only, as in many ports, better payment, but also the removal of this constant threat of reduced rates if the pilots in a port are enjoying high earnings due to increased efforts on their part; also some

attempt to solve or put on a fairer basis this even more complex question of "working conditions."

Mr. Tate then submitted the following formula which he thought would meet the case :—

All pilotage rates in every port shall be adjusted to bring them to 75 per cent over the 1939 earnings.

If, however, the resultant earnings from this new rate, calculated on the work over the average of an agreed post-war period, are 100 per cent over 1939 or are below 33 1/3 per cent above the 1939 earnings, then the new rate shall be adjusted to bring the earnings into the range of this maximum and minimum standard.

That any increase or decrease in rates from this shall be on a national basis.

He went on to explain the working of this formula which was then discussed by the Executive.

It was suggested that these words might be added :

provided that every port shall be entitled to an increase which will give it at least an increase of 33 1/3 per cent over pre-war earnings.

(Mr. Tate deals more fully with the matter in an article on page 7).

There were references to the possible creation of an equalisation fund and the Chairman said he thought it was still in the shipowners' mind.

The Secretary mentioned that a number of ports would fear the consequences of the proposed increase on their rates, more particularly the non-compulsory ports. It had been found, and he gave one instance of this, that a reduction in non-compulsory rates led to a big increase in the number of ships taking a pilot with a subsequent increase in net earnings.

Cutter costs also came into the discussion, and Mr. Barron mentioned three services where they could not get the Authorities to separate the running costs from the gross earnings.

A point made by Mr. Wynn was that if the pre-war earnings of a port were too low no yardstick would alter that because the yardstick must measure all ports. He mentioned King's Lynn in particular and said that they required an entire revision of their rates.

Mr. Barron said that the rates at King's Lynn were the same as in 1941. The pilots went on strike in 1940 because they could not afford to run their cutters. These had since been sold to the Authority and 26 per cent was deducted from the gross earnings for their upkeep.

The Chairman said the shipowners agreed with them that there were anomalies and were prepared to deal with them. He reminded the Executive that nobody had yet said anything about considering a basic figure on a sea standard with a percentage added to it, and the question of grading.

Mr. Tate said that the battle was moving from earnings to manpower. Once the pilots in port A had been fixed at say £1,000 a year, the port would not be allowed to carry too many pilots.

Mr. Wynn commented that never at any time had the shipowner given them any idea of what he considered reasonable incomes for the shipmaster and mate. There had been ample evidence that they wanted to bring the status of the pilot down to that of the coastwise master. Trinity House would not listen to it. "Once you get anywhere near this 'master and mate,'" Mr. Wynn added, "he will bring you as low as he can."

Mr. Goldsmith: Grading as suggested by the shipowner is still on the basis of "master and mate." Put a percentage on that and discuss it.

Mr. Tate: If we can agree with grading it is the thin end of the wedge.

Mr. Goldsmith: The shipowners first mooted this suggestion of "between master and mate" in 1925—possibly before. They did not succeed then and in what way has the situation changed?

Sir John Inskip: They did not succeed then because we have always been resisting it. The Ministry has I think been attracted by the idea. What has Mr. Tate in mind to do in the case of a port where the rates bring in more than the 100 per cent?

Mr. Pead suggested that it would be paid into an equalisation fund and Mr. Mock's idea was that it would be taken off monthly and put aside.

Mr. Tate said he took an average of 24 ports pre-war and the yearly variation of those, taken at random, was not £30.

The Secretary: I foresee a lot of wrangling about the adjustment of rates.

Mr. Wynn: This equalisation scheme sounds glorious, but fortunately or unfortunately, we do not all belong to pooling stations. We are piece workers and earn different monies according to how much we do. How much are we going to take from A and how much from B? This equalisation would not work on non-pooling stations.

Mr. Goldsmith contended that what was proposed by Mr. Tate had been going on for a long time. When the pilots earned more than the shipowners thought they should, the shipowners moved for a reduction, and bore in mind how long the pilots had been earning

more than it was thought they should. The scheme would regulate to some extent the basis over which the movement should be made. He thought some of the difficulties would be forestalled by knowing where they were going to start from.

Mr. Webb: A man could say "I have earned that money and I want it." The Act says he cannot charge more or less, but shall receive what he earns less the authorised deductions.

Mr. Tate: It is not beyond the wit of an accountant to deal with it.

Mr. Barron: The small ports agree with grading the ports. The average mate in the smallest coaster is earning £10 a week and our men say they would be jolly glad to get that £500 a year.

Mr. Wynn: If you discuss grading you discuss salary and if we have a salary we must have hours of work. The tendency is 40 hours a week and that would not do a fifth of the work our own pilots are doing. The average length of our turn is 13 hours and we work every day.

Mr. Mock: We will meet the anomalies when we come to them; why not agree on the principle?

Mr. Watson: It is bringing us back eventually to the "master and mate."

The Secretary advised the Executive that they should examine the "between master and mate" proposal for the simple reason that if they said "no" there would be deadlock. They must put themselves in the same position regarding the Chamber's proposal as they expected the Chamber to be in regarding that of the pilots.

The Chairman: Provided they do not say as before that we must first accept their proposal in principle.

Bringing the discussion to a close Mr. Love said, "and you will allow us to discuss the shipowners' sea standard plus a percentage proposal."

INCREASED MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Webb reported on the financial position and mentioned that there had been a net increase of 40 to 50 in the membership this year so far, which was satisfactory. He would be able to give the exact figure for 1950 at the next meeting.

THE CASE OF PILOT POWELL

The Secretary reported on two cases in which the Executive at their previous meeting agreed to give legal support to members. (see *The Pilot*, November, 1950, page 5).

The decision of the County Court was against Pilot Powell of Barry. Sir John said he was surprised at the judgment; he thought it would have been in favour of the pilot on legal grounds because of the way the original inquiry was conducted.

The Executive agreed to make a grant towards Pilot Powell's costs.

PILOT ELLISON

The other case was that of Pilot Ellison, who was in the Swedish vessel *Divina* when she collided with H.M. submarine *Truculent*. He was summoned to appear before Trinity House and to take his licence with him; he was also informed that he could be legally represented. Mr. Ellison was advised to go to the solicitors who had acted for him earlier, but as it turned out he could have gone without legal representation and saved a lot of money. Sir John explained that wording of the summons had led to some misunderstanding. Pilot Ellison was not rebuked or reprimanded by Trinity House.

Mr. Goldsmith pointed out that the summons was a routine document which was sent to every pilot when his licence might be affected. What they could not understand was the pilot being called to Trinity House when no one had suggested any blame falling on the pilot and there had only been a settlement out of court as to the financial responsibility.

On the proposition of Mr. Watson, seconded by Mr. Mock, it was agreed to settle the solicitors' bill of £60.8.0d. Sir John mentioned that in a much more serious matter relating to the *Truculent* disaster the Association had stood behind Pilot Ellison and paid £60 legal expenses for him.

The Chairman expressed the Executive's sympathy with the pilot in what he had gone through.

INSURANCE

Arising from this case Mr. Webb raised the question of pilots' insurance.

Mr. Mock suggested that the Secretary should write an article in *The Pilot* on the subject. Sir John replied that times without number the matter had been dealt with in *The Pilot*. Under the Association's scheme, a pilot could recover £100 plus £50 towards any costs incurred in fighting an allegation of negligence.

PENDING MATTERS

The Secretary reported on several pending matters :—

The Humber inquiry had been fixed for December 15th and several of the smaller ports had applications before Trinity House.

After a good deal of pressure from the Association, the Ardrossan Authority was now preparing a proper code of bye-laws.

Information was coming in slowly from the ports regarding their earnings, but quite a lot was beginning to come from some of the ports now that they were alive to the situation which had developed, and some of them were very frank about how they would be affected.

Then there was the question of the exemption limit on the Humber. The Ministry had now ruled that if there were an exemption limit it must apply to the whole district; it could not apply to part.

Replying to Mr. Barron, Sir John said he had advised the Ardrossan pilots to see that the boarding and landing charge was kept quite separate from the pilotage rates.

Mr. Barron added that the small ports had made up their minds that this was necessary. As many as possible were going to ask their Authorities to take over the cutters and in some cases the stations as well.

GRAVE DANGER IN WAIVING RATES AND LIMITS

As a matter of general interest the Chairman mentioned a pilotage question which had arisen in connection with the opening of a new port on Loch Long in the Clyde district. It was outside the compulsory area, but for the convenience of the customs an incoming vessel had to enter compulsory waters. The pilots wondered whether they could arrange a rate for the whole run without prejudicing their rights in the compulsory area.

Mr. Barron suggested that this was one of the cases which made the yardstick problem so difficult and the Clyde might settle it on their own.

The Secretary explained that the proposal was that in order to get agreement on the rate for the new work the pilots were doing, the rate for taking a vessel into the compulsory area should be waived. He saw grave danger in such waiving. It was much the same thing as failing to keep the limits of a district. "Directly you do that," Sir John added, "you are jeopardizing your limits and your rates."

Mr. Webb: It would be a preferential rate. You have always fought that and I hope you always will.

Sir John advised the Clyde pilots to agree to a fair rate for pilotage to the new port, and having done that to hold on to the compulsory rate.

This discussion led Mr. Tate to mention the exempt tonnage rate on the Tees, under which small vessels were piloted 12 miles for £1 or about enough to cover the pilot's out-of-pocket expenses.

Sir John said it was because of the absurdly low exempt tonnage rate that the Tees pilots had had to apply for an increase in their rates and they now had 100 per cent on their basic rate. These preferential rates were wrong, but there was a right and a wrong time for attacking them.

SWANSEA'S FIGHT

Swansea's resistance to a proposed cut of 25 per cent was mentioned by Mr. Mock, who said that the Chamber of Shipping men on the Authority would not listen to the pilot's offer. At the meeting of the Authority at which the proposal was carried, two of the pilots' supporters were absent, and the chairman's casting vote was against the pilots.

"We are going to move heaven and earth to see it does not go through," he said. "It is an absolute imposition and I have been asked to inquire what you are going to do. We know you will oppose it but we want to know just how."

The Secretary: "You can surely rely on this Association giving you help, but there is nothing we can do until we have been notified by the Ministry that they have received an application for a bye-law. Certainly we are going to fight it; when the time comes we will do what we can. The Swansea pilots owe more than they seem to admit to this Association. It will support the level of earnings you yourself have advocated—and I should say you had every expectation of avoiding the proposed cut."

Obituary

JOHN D. KELLY, *Isle of Wight*

Mr. John D. Kelly, a retired Trinity House pilot for the Isle of Wight District, died recently at his home, Beech House, Saxholm Way, Southampton.

He was a Southampton man and began his career as apprentice in the sailing ship *Kithnory* of Glasgow, in 1897. After securing his various certificates he served with the Shaw Savill, Royal Mail, and Cunard companies.

In December, 1915, he joined the Inward Pilot Service of the Isle of Wight District and was transferred to the Outward Service in January, 1930.

From 1936 until the outbreak of war, Mr. Kelly was senior choice pilot for the P. and O. company, and during the war years served as pilot at Glasgow. He retired through ill-health two years ago.

Mr. Kelly left a widow and one son, the son outliving his father by little more than a fortnight, being found dead in a car. Heart failure was the cause of death in both cases.

F.W.K.

THE SEARCH FOR A BASIS OF AGREEMENT

By D. H. TATE

The following article by Mr. Tate embodies his arguments for the suggested formula he put before the Executive Committee at their meeting last December.

The U.K.P.A. representatives left the last joint meeting in a very pessimistic mood. It had been brought to their notice and that of the Chamber that the Ministry had substituted a new formula for the existing one, and although they stated that this was for general guidance only and would be elastic enough to allow for all conditions in a port, yet its application would result in most cases in earnings far below what we considered to be equitable. This opened the door for the Chamber to attack earnings in most ports.

I have endeavoured, by examining the Chamber's scheme and the Ministry's suggestions to try to find some common talking point; any basis where there is the slightest hope of agreement.

The Chamber has seen the psychological mistake of "midway between master and mate" and Sir John Fisher made laboured efforts to wriggle out of this corner and asked us to substitute "basis" for it. To my mind this play on words does not alter the principle behind it, and I would not like to see us accept this basis.

What has brought about these negotiations? All parties want an established guiding earning level for every port for the various reasons set out above.

Can we then examine the position and find out what has brought about this variance at ports. We find rate increases over pre-war varying from nothing to 145 per cent, all or most granted for a specific war-time reason which has disappeared. We find earnings higher due to these rate increases and/or increased work or less pilots doing the work.

The Chamber argues that pilots in a port whose earnings are inflated by a war-time rate have no right to the whole of that rate now.

If our remuneration is to be governed by any factor then I must submit that that factor can only in the first instance be the cost of living which must apply to all ports in the same proportion. Then if these war-time rates are to be levelled, and, firstly, an allowance made for the cost of living, what are we to use as our base? To add to any post-war period must only perpetuate the inequalities that exist and aggravate the position. In my opinion we can only start at the last period of economic calm and take 1939. The Chamber admit that rates were at that period equitable, although there may have been instances of bad rates. On the whole, pilots accepted them at this time. Then to the 1939 rates let us add 75 per cent. Sir John Fisher suggested that the cost of pilotage throughout the U.K. had increased on the average by 76 per cent per nett registered ton.

When we look at other shipping charges and at freights, I do not think we are laying an excessive burden on shipping by increasing the pre-war cost per pilotage service by 75 per cent. If all other factors in a port were equal to 1939 the pilots would now get 75 per cent more remuneration than in 1939. Again not a very big increase when we look at the cost of living and that other factor which we cannot turn into percentage, the general improvement in working conditions which has applied to other branches of industry and public services. I further believe that this figure would not be very far away from the Chamber's "basis," however they arrived at it.

At this point we seem to have fairly common ground with the Chamber and even with the Ministry. Here, however, we differ, and from this point onwards several basic principles must be established. The Chamber would have us call this 75 per cent increase a salary. It would seem that our minds are made up as to the impracticability of a salary, so I will not labour that point, but the obvious desire to establish us on a salary when ports as a whole are busy and likely to be busier on re-armament needs no further comment.

If we insist on the establishment of a rate called the 1950 or 1951 rate we must examine the result on earnings and see if it is to operate fairly for all ports. First we must demand that as piece workers we must be allowed to keep any increased remuneration that an increase of shipping or a lowering of the numbers of pilots gives us. Are we by the same token prepared to stand by a curtailment of trade? I maintain we must, but only within prescribed limits.

It has always been a principle of the U.K.P.A. that where pilots are necessary in a port they should be paid adequately for their services. Therefore, if the application of 75 per cent to the 1939 rates does not give pilots in a port at least 33 per cent above their 1939 earnings, then that 75 per cent increase in rates shall be further raised until earnings are not less than 33 per cent above 1939—in effect a subsidy for a port, but if we ask for a subsidy what do we give in return? Just this, that if the 75 per cent increase on the 1939 rates results in earnings exceeding 100 per cent above 1939 earnings there shall be a reduction in the rates to bring earnings to 100 per cent above 1939.

How would the establishment of this affect that other equally important aspect, working conditions? The Chamber's suggestion of a salary would mean that they would demand the absolute minimum of pilots in a port as

(Continued on next page.)

£1,700 A YEAR

But these Pilots do 70 hours a Week on the Bridge!

MR. L. PICKERSGILL of Middlesbrough sent to *The Pilot* a copy of the *Swedish Shipping Gazette* given to him by a Swedish captain. It contains an article by Frederick Corbett of interest to all pilots on pilotage in the "Inner Route" between the Great Barrier Reef and the Queensland coast.

The author says that the increasing use being made of "the world's most beautiful waterway" means busier days ahead for the group of master mariners banded together in the Queensland coast and Torres Strait Pilot Service to maintain the longest pilotage run in the world—1,500 miles—from Thursday Island, north-west of the extreme northerly tip of the Australian mainland to Point Danger near the N.S.W.—Queensland border.

Up to the turn of the present century the route was a graveyard for ships because of its unsavoury reputation, Lloyd's of London put a clause in policies which read: "The ship warranted not to enter Torres Strait." When owners wanted the clause waived they had to pay an extra premium on each sailing. Shipowners shunned the route for decades. But that did not deter six shipmasters from forming, in 1890, a private pilot service. They made less than £100 a man in the first year, and had practically decided to abandon the service when they asked George James Banks, to become secretary. He took one look at a

Lloyd's policy, and declined. His father Captain J. M. Banks, who had often sailed the route, talked him into taking the job; later his brother T. M. Banks joined him.

The Banks brothers kept statistics of strandings and losses inside and outside the Barrier Reef. In 1907, T. M. Banks went to London with the case for the "Inner Route", and persuaded Lloyd's to delete the warranty and extra premium. The pilot service bounded ahead after that.

Today the eighteen licensed pilots and four deputy pilots handle about 500 ships each year. Each pilot has an equity in a club house on Thursday Island, where he lives while waiting for a ship.

Shipowners pay a fee of £95 for each passage, and the pilot handles an average of twenty-five ships a year. The average earnings of a pilot last year was £1,700 for an average working week of 63 hours. Often they are on the bridge for seventy hours each week, at least forty hours on end without sleep.

The average time of pilotage is five days to Brisbane, and seven days to Sydney. All the Torres Strait pilots agree that ability to keep alert for five days without proper sleep is a major asset on the job.

THE SEARCH FOR A BASIS OF AGREEMENT—continued from previous page.

any addition would mean more cost to shipping and the battle would move from earnings to manpower—something that to my mind, when one thinks of the many and varied conditions in ports, is incapable of solution. We know the Chamber's answer to any question of manpower; it is a matter of local Authorities. We also know how that works in practice. Will my suggestions give to the pilots the opportunity of settling this matter themselves? I think they will, in that any increase or decrease in pilots will affect earnings directly and the only persons interested will be the pilots.

Further, the placing of basic rates on a national basis for all time removes the power from local Authorities to increase or decrease our earnings—generally the latter—in what they call the best interests of the port.

I must point out that once established the alteration of rates with the proportional alteration of the limiting maximum and minimums, would be on a national basis, except in the case where a port or the Chamber could prove exceptional circumstances to warrant interference.