



The Pilot

No. 2, Vol. 32

MAY

1953

The Secretary has sent the following letter dated May 1st, to all the ports in membership with the Association;—

CONFERENCE—JULY 8th and 9th, 1953

I am sending this customary reminder to all ports that notices of resolutions or nominations to the Executive Committee should reach me not later than Monday, May 25th.

The position with regard to the Executive Committee is as follows. There are at present six members of the Executive Committee in addition to the President and Vice-Presidents. The rules lay down that there shall be not less than six or more than nine members of the Executive Committee over and above the ex-officio members. Conference may or may not decide to increase the number of the Executive Committee, but there will in any case be three vacancies to fill caused by the retirement of the three members who have been longest in office without election. They are Mr. J. H. Innes (Clyde), Mr. M. M. Marshall (South Shields) and Mr. W. E. Spencer (Cinque Ports) all of whom offer themselves for re-election.

The Executive Committee have requested me to let all ports have this information which will be repeated in *The Pilot* about to be published.—Yours truly, John H. Inskip.

How Many Executive Members ?

The limitation of the ordinary members of the Executive Committee to six was the result of the circumstances which arose at the 1952 Conference. Four members of the Committee did not offer themselves for re-election—Messrs. Love, Pead, Ward and Mock—and when Conference decided to adhere to the rules and bar nominations not made by the prescribed date only Mr. Watson, a retiring member who offered himself for re-election, and Mr. Slade whose nomination was in order were elected, automatically, of course.

One result of the reduced size of the Executive has been a considerable reduction in the cost of Executive meetings, and Sir John Inskip put it to the committee at their meeting in March that they might agree with him in the light of their experience that the smaller body had dealt with the business very well and expeditiously. On the other hand Mr. Eagle and Mr. Innes strongly favoured

making the committee as fully representative as possible by restoring it to full strength and on a vote they carried their point by 4 to 2. It will therefore come before Conference in July as a majority recommendation from the Executive.

In the meantime Sir John was to advise the ports of the names of the members due to retire at the forthcoming election and of those offering themselves for re-election. He has done so in the letter already quoted.

Sub-Committee's Scheme

The sub-committee consisting of Messrs. D. H. Tate, J. H. Innes, W. E. Spencer and L. R. Slade, appointed by the Executive Committee in December to inquire into the possibilities of finding some means of determining an equitable level of earnings for pilots at various ports and districts have had two informal but lengthy meetings in London. The first was on March 4th and a preliminary report was put before the Executive Committee which met on board H.Q.S. *Wellington* on March 12th. This is not the time to deal in any detail with the work of the sub-committee, but two passages from the report may be quoted.

"As it is generally recognised that complete unity of purpose cannot be achieved by the production of a "yardstick" whereby all ports could be measured, no time was wasted in this direction and the activities of the committee were directed towards the next logical step, enquiring whether there were enough ports with a similarity of aim that would allow them to be regarded as having a common base or belonging to the same group, or unit, for the purpose of assessing their earning level.

"In this direction some 40 ports were considered and it was found that perhaps they could be placed into five groups. We must hasten to add that there is no suggestion that the grouping is final or correct, in fact there is ample evidence that there must be some alterations, for the simple reason that the grouping merely followed the earnings at the ports both pre and post war. It must also be pointed out that there are ports included who belong to the Union and we are not presuming to settle their affairs, they were merely included to make the examples fully representative."

The Executive Committee were very appreciative of what the sub-committee had

done, Mr. Marshall, for one, admiring their courage.

Sir John Inskip said he had felt for a long time that there was only one alternative to dealing with each individual port separately and it was grouping. He thought the Ministry and the Chamber of Shipping would be pleased to hear of any proposal to simplify the problem.

The Executive, on the proposition of Mr. Wynn seconded by Mr. Watson, authorised the sub-committee to continue their work

TWO QUESTIONS

They arose on the Humber but are of National Interest

TWO Humber questions came before the Executive Committee in March.

The first was whether a pilot could be ordered out of his district. The circumstances were outlined by Mr. Spencer who said a steamer of the New Zealand Shipping Company had one of her engines out of order and there was a fear that if the other were stopped it could not be started again. A London pilot was aboard and the company asked if a Humber pilot could go down and join the vessel so that she could go straight in when she reached the Humber. The Authority agreed but the pilot refused, which he was entitled to do. Mr. Spencer also referred to a case in which he was concerned. He was asked to go to Liverpool to join a ship, but without payment for coming round in her. "They wanted me in case anything went wrong!" he said.

The Secretary had advised Mr. Walton, the Humber pilot concerned to inform the Authority that he did not recognise that they had any right to order him to leave his District without payment but in the special circumstances he would respond to the request; also that he would make his own charge covering all expenses until he returned to the Hull pilotage limits.

When Mr. Spencer said that the pilots agreed among themselves not to grant the service Sir John commented that he thought that might be a mistake, if the vessel was really crippled, but the Chairman urged that the background of the incident should be taken into consideration. Mr. Marshall said the Humber pilots felt that they had not been fairly treated by the reduction in their rates.

The second question was whether against his will a pilot could be appropriated to a shipowner. The Humber Authority had claimed that they had the power to do it.

The Secretary said that the point had never been put to the test; there was no decision of the Ministry or court of law to guide them. He had always held that it could not be done, and that in fact the working of choice pilotage must depend on the goodwill not only of the

and Mr. Webb emphasised the urgency of having something constructive to put before Conference.

The second meeting of the sub-committee was held on April 28th. Mr. Slade was unable to attend, but Mr. C. D. Griffiths who happened to be in town accepted an invitation to be present. A scheme was formulated which will be submitted to the Executive Committee and if approved by them in principal, it will be sent to all ports in sufficient time for them to examine it before Conference.

PLANKS WERE MISSING

Tyne Pilot's Fall Through Gap in Jetty

A SOUTH SHIELDS pilot, Mr. Watson, met with an accident on a jetty belonging to the Tyne Improvement Commission which is used by the pilots' launch. He fell through a gap where some planks were missing but Mr. Marshall hoped Mr. Watson's injuries were not very serious. Sir John reported that the pilot had asked the Association to help him in prosecuting his claim. There was no question of fact: the only doubt was about the extent of the injuries. Anything the pilot received under the Industrial Injuries Act would have to come off anything he might get from the owners of the jetty. Sir John said he proposed writing to the Tyne Commission who owned the jetty asking whether they admitted liability and if they did it was for the pilot to name an amount. Mr. Watson might have to submit to medical examination.

Mr. Marshall said that the pilots had been using the jetty for 100 years and it was commonly known as the Pilots' Jetty. They paid no rent for it but the Commission had allowed them to build a hut and put a light at the end, both of which they paid for. The Commission said it was a public jetty. When the accident happened it should have been reported to the Tyne Authority by the Commission but he himself brought it before the Authority. He thought the Authority should have made the claim—the pilot might have lost his life.

Sir John suggested that the Tyne pilots should call upon the Pilotage Authority to provide them with a proper place for boarding their launch if this jetty were not safe.

individual pilot but of the whole body of pilots. The question of pooling came into it, too.

The Chairman quoted a legal authority as having said that no court of law would uphold it. The Humber pilots had said that they would withdraw choice pilotage as soon as their cut came into operation and here was the Authority endeavouring to force it upon them. The choice system was the biggest curse ever inflicted on pilotage, Mr. Tate added.

FORMAL OR INFORMAL INQUIRY ?

Cinque Ports' Strenuous Opposition to Proposed Dover Harbour Pilots

TRINITY HOUSE have applied for a bye-law to empower them to appoint Dover Harbour pilots. This is receiving strenuous opposition from the Cinque Ports pilots who want a formal inquiry where they could be represented by counsel instead of an informal one in which they say they have no faith. This, however, creates a difficult position because informal inquiries which have been the practice for many years were the result of an agitation by the U.K.P.A. to avoid the much more costly procedure.

The Secretary who put the position before the Executive Committee at the March meeting said that the preliminaries had been completed. The application for the bye-law had been made and the pilots' objection lodged. The matter was now before the Ministry who in due course would fix a day for an informal inquiry. The subject was on the agenda because the Cinque Ports pilots were anxious to put up the best fight they could and thought it would be in their interests to employ counsel and have a formal inquiry. They were perfectly entitled to ask for that, but the question was whether the Minister would concede it. Sir John reminded the Committee that in the old days, very soon after the 1914-18 war, when there was a spate of inquiries the Chamber of Shipping brought up all the guns they possessed and employed learned counsel. The process became so expensive that the pilots saw they were going to be run off their legs. They therefore asked for the kind of inquiry now held and from that day to this there had been only informal inquiries, except in the very important Liverpool inquiry. The Cinque Ports pilots may quite well say that this matter is equally important to them. A formal inquiry meant that the expense had to be borne by one or other, or all the applicants—the expense of the counsel who held the inquiry, and the cost of a full shorthand note were only two items. There were also the costs of the other parties which might or might not be thrown on the unsuccessful party. Pending consideration by the Executive the Cinque Ports pilots' application for a formal inquiry had not yet been made.

Mr. Spencer emphasised that the Cinque Ports were not saddling the U.K.P.A. with it, but they wanted to fight the proposal and were willing to bear the expense. When the matter was first discussed at Trinity House the pilots were quite happy about it but later the situation was the reverse. They had seen something of the informal inquiries and felt that they would get more justice from a formal one. They knew they were going away from what the U.K.P.A. fought for, but they had no faith in an informal inquiry.

When Mr. Spencer said that there was no appeal from an informal inquiry Sir John interposed with the remark that neither was there any appeal from a formal one. His earlier remarks he said, were only intended to point out some of the possible consequences of a formal inquiry.

The Chairman said that the application for a formal inquiry was not going from the U.K.P.A., but he assured the Cinque Ports pilots that they were wholeheartedly with them.

Replying to a question, Mr. Spencer said that one of the reasons given for the proposal was that pilots stopped ships going to Dover harbour under certain conditions. It was not the pilots who did so but shipowners who would not risk their ships.

Mr. Wynn suggested that the proposal was a curtailment of a pilotage district and Mr. Eagle's view was that it amounted to tampering with a pilot's licence.

A reference by the Chairman to "creating a precedent" led Sir John to say that it must not be thought that the U.K.P.A. was wanting to depart from the agreement. This was regarded as an exceptional case.

Mr. Griffiths mentioned that he had been to Dover and had helped the pilots in preparing their objection to the proposal. He assured Mr. Spencer that the U.K.P.A. were 100 per cent. behind the Cinque Ports pilots and the only question was the employment of counsel. The London Pilotage District was unlike any other; it was not merely the district of the Cinque Ports. It was divided into five main stations and classes of pilots were licensed for parts of the district, those classes being defined under the bye-laws. The proposal was to amend the bye-law and remove Dover from the definition of the Cinque Ports class.

"JUST TANKERS"

The Secretary reported that since the last meeting of the Executive there had been an informal inquiry at the Ministry regarding the proposed bye-laws in the London district providing for selected pilots boarding tankers of not less than 8,000 tons from the cutter. Many of the pilots were there and heard the discussion. The Minister granted the application subject to the limit being increased from 8,000 to 10,000 tons.

When Mr. Tate remarked "Just tankers" Mr. Spencer commented "You know how long that will last!"

The Executive have appointed Mr. L. R. Slade to serve on the Finance Committee. The other members are the two vice-presidents.

PENDING MATTERS

IN his report on pending matters at the March meeting the Secretary gave the Executive Committee this information:—

LONDON

The London Pilots' Council was asking for an increase in the pilotage rates of the whole of the London district. They had sent in a well drawn up and informative statement and the application would be made in due course, but Sir John thought each branch would have to put in its own application, sponsored by the Council. It was all in order and he would keep in touch with the Council.

THE CLYDE

An application was made for an inquiry regarding the pilots' proposal for boarding and landing fees to be put into the pension fund. The shipowners objected to the proposed fees but the Clyde Pilotage Authority thought the matter could be disposed of without an inquiry if the Minister so wished. The pilots had agreed to that course.

YARMOUTH

An application for a 50 per cent increase had been made but the Ministry had not asked for the observations of the Association. It was suggested that the boarding and landing charges should be increased to produce the whole of the revenue required to cover the running of the pilot boat.

FALMOUTH

The application for an increase had been granted; there was complete agreement and everyone was happy. They were now awaiting confirmation of the bye-laws.

KINGS LYNN

A 20 per cent. deduction from the pilots' earnings towards the upkeep of the cutters was proposed but the pilots were resisting.

BELFAST

An application for an increase in the boarding and landing rates was before the Ministry.

ABERDEEN

New draft bye-laws were under discussion and would soon be submitted to the Ministry. There might be indirect effect on the ratio.

ARDROSSAN

Draft bye-laws were before the Ministry who had informed the Pilotage Authority that they could not confirm a bye-law compelling the pilots to take out an insurance.

THE TYNE

Three new pilots have been appointed. Mr. Marshall followed Sir John's report with a strong criticism of the preferential rates for ships built on the river. The vessels paid only 30 shillings pilotage each way when they went outside for trials and returned to the river; the pilots contended that they should pay full pilotage.

Mr. Tate described the new ship racket as a complete swindle.

Mr. Marshall said the argument was that a ship must be made fast, otherwise the act of pilotage was not completed. The pilots did not agree with that. There were four pilotage stages on the Tyne. If he took a ship to the third stage and was then told to take her back to the first he could not claim pilotage for anything but the first.

LOCAL SECRETARIES

The following changes have been notified.
Portsmouth. W. F. N. Quinton, Trinity House Pilots, Victoria Pier, Portsmouth.
Fowey. M. Hingston-Randolph, Lamorna, Fore Street, Polruan-by-Fowey, Cornwall.
Aberdeen. R. G. Hall, Aberdeen Harbour Pilots, North Pier, Aberdeen.



CHEVALIER DE L'ORDRE DU MERITE MARITIME

Pilot George W. Somerwill of Southampton has been appointed Chevalier de l'Ordre du Merite Maritime by the French Government. Notification of the honour has been sent to him by the French Consul in Southampton, who will present the diploma to him on July 14th.

Mr. Somerwill, who is a Southampton man, had eight years in sail and then served in Australian-owned ships, including those of the Adelaide Steamship Company.

Entering pilotage in 1912 he was for many years on the inward service, and in 1922 became choice pilot for the Canadian-Pacific for Channel and inward ships. Then he transferred to Southampton, and has been the French Line's first choice pilot since 1937 and Cunard's first choice pilot since 1948.

For nearly five years he has been a sub-commissioner for pilotage, Isle of Wight district.