

GRATIFYING messages of approval of the Executive's decision to issue *The Pilot* more frequently have been received. It is felt that in this way the members will be encouraged to take a keener interest in the work of the Association and will realise more fully its many and varied activities in their interest.

Only a few weeks have elapsed since the first issue under the new arrangement, but again Sir John Inskip has many interesting matters to report. Other subjects are in hand, but they have not developed sufficiently for any announcement to be made; it may be possible to say something about them in the next issue.

Here is the summary prepared for *The Pilot* by Sir John:—

Clyde.—Negotiations for an increase in pilotage dues are continuing in an attempt to come to an agreement with the Chamber of Shipping. The Clyde pilots are united in their disapproval of the Ministry's formula so far as it affects them.

Isle of Wight.—The objections lodged by the Chamber of Shipping have been under consideration, and if it is found impossible to get a measure of agreement with the Chamber, it is intended to ask the Elder Brethren to receive a deputation from the pilots accompanied by Sir John Inskip.

Ipswich.—The Ministry is being pressed to re-open this matter by calling a meeting of the parties, and in the meantime the pilots have expressed the hope that the Elder Brethren will not submit the amended bye-law for confirmation by the Ministry.

Wisbech.—There is nothing further to report with regard to the application, but the appeal of Pilot Barron against the revocation of his licence has been successful. The Judge reduced the punishment from revocation of the licence to suspension for one month which brings Pilot Barron in line with his brother pilots who were concerned in the same matter. This is a very satisfactory result and will doubtless have its repercussions because the Wisbech Town Council, which is the Pilotage Authority, cannot fail to pay serious attention to the comments of the Judge.

Sunderland.—This Association continues to give its full support to the application for compulsory pilotage at Sunderland to which the Chamber of Shipping is objecting.

London Pilotage.—The formalities in connection with the application for an Order amending the London Pilotage Amendment Order 1937 so as to allow four pilots to be elected to serve on the London Pilotage Committee instead of three have been completed and it is hoped that the Order will now be granted.

Fowey.—An increase of 33½% came into operation on 1st January, 1948.

Swansea.—Negotiations have proceeded in connection with the application for an increase of 33½% and a settlement has now been reached with the Chamber of Shipping for an increase of 25% which the Ministry is being asked to confirm.

Londonderry.—Further correspondence with the Authority. The Ministry has been informed that the pilots will be submitting draft bye-laws in agreement, it is hoped, with the Authority.

Seaham.—The Ministry has granted an increase from 25% to 33½%. It remains to be seen how this will work out, but there is room for improvement in conditions at Seaham, and the Association will watch the position closely.

London River Pilots.—The pilots continue to press for additional pilots as they are not satisfied with the Elder Brethren's decision to appoint only five new pilots. It is unfortunate that the River pilots do not give this Association their full backing. A section keeps undermining efforts which might otherwise have been successful and makes things very difficult for Sir John Inskip.

National Insurance Acts.—The Ministry of National Insurance wrote to the Transport and General Workers' Union on January 19th asking for any further representations they might have to make in view of the decision of this Association that pilots should be regarded as self-employed. Up to the present the Union has been strongly in favour of pilots being regarded as employed persons and it remains to be seen what line the Union and its pilot members will now take.

Seamen's Ration Books.—The London Channel pilots having had an application to be issued with Seamen's Ration Books R.B.6 (Modified) refused, the Association has taken this matter up with the Food Office. Up to the present only an acknowledgment has been received and it is hoped that there will be some development to report in the next issue of *The Pilot*.

Ministry Formula.—Further letters have been exchanged with the Ministry and a reply to the last communication following the last meeting of the Executive Committee is now awaited.

Membership.—This continues to move in the right direction. The Trent pilots have now resumed membership after a break during the War, and the Sunderland pilots are now 100 per cent members of the Association.

ADVENTURE IN THE WASH

During one of the January gales Pilot Dale of Wisbech was jerked overboard from the pilot cutter in the Wash and swam about in the darkness for the best part of an hour before reaching a life-buoy thrown out from a Dutch vessel. To get rid of some of the weight while swimming Mr. Dale succeeded in shedding his overcoat and jacket.

YOU MAY HELP "THE PILOT"

The following extracts are taken from the first page of the first number of *The Pilot* which was published in October, 1920.

"For some time it has been recognised by members of the Executive that the work of the Association has not been sufficiently well known among the members. The need of more propaganda has been strongly urged at many Conferences, an obvious weakness of the organisation being that its membership embraces little more than 50 per cent of the pilots round the coast. *The Pilot* will endeavour to remedy that state of affairs. . . .

"We sincerely hope *The Pilot* will succeed in establishing that link between the ports which has been hitherto lacking, and its measure of success will be in proportion to the co-operation of branch secretaries and individual pilots."

It will be agreed that the magazine has not failed in its mission even if it has not produced all the results desired and now more than a quarter of a century later when it is making more frequent appearances it needs the co-operation of branch secretaries and individual pilots more than ever. Contributions intended for publication may be sent to Sir John Inskip at Bristol and will reach the Editor in due course.

"60 PER CENT!"

The following letter was sent by the Secretary to the Editor of the *Economist*:—
12th January, 1948.

Dear Sir,

"My attention has been called to an article in your issue of the 3rd instant relating to the increase in freight rates. Your statement that pilotage rates in the United Kingdom rose by 60 per cent from January 1st, 1948, is absolutely untrue, and I cannot refrain from making the comment that if the information on which your article is based is equally at fault, very little value can be attached to it.

"I would not have thought it necessary to call your attention to this and to ask you to correct your mistake if it were not that this Association is at present engaged actively in an effort to get an improvement in the conditions and rate of pay for pilots generally. Needless to say, pilots everywhere would be well content if your statement that their remuneration had been increased by 60 per cent on January 1st, 1948, was anywhere near the truth."

Yours truly,

JOHN H. INSKIP.

RATES AT IRISH PORTS

The basis of charging pilotage rates on vessels entering and leaving Dublin has been altered from ship's draught to gross tonnage. The same rates of charge will apply in future to both foreign-going and coastwise vessels, and for pilotage inwards and outwards.

The pilotage rates on vessels entering and leaving Limerick have been increased by 16½% over the rates fixed in 1933.

NEW SECRETARIES

The Secretary of the Trent pilots is Mr. R. Ancaster, 30, Cranbrook Avenue, Cottingham Road, Hull.

The Ipswich pilots have a new Secretary: Mr. B. R. Booth, 20, Belstead Avenue, Ipswich. He succeeds Mr. G. A. Gardiner.

Mr. J. T. Nicholson has retired from the secretaryship of the Hartlepool pilots and Mr. J. S. Storrow, 72, Marine Drive, Hartlepool has been appointed to the position.

Mr. J. Riches, the Lowestoft secretary, has changed his address to "Saint Annes," Skamacre Crescent, Normanston Drive Lowestoft.

Mr. H. A. Burton, a Tees pilot, gave an address at a meeting of the Hartlepool Round Table on "Pilots and Pilotage."

TIME RIPE FOR NEW REVIEW OF PILOTAGE

Suggested Inquiry by Departmental Committee is a Bold Step to Stop Aimless Drifting

The January issue of The Pilot reported the adoption by the Executive Committee of a proposal by Mr. Tate that the Government should be approached to hold a Departmental Committee inquiry into pilotage. Mr. Tate wrote this article on the subject in response to a request by the Editor.

IN recent years it has become increasingly apparent that pilots generally are aware of the need of the complete reorganisation of pilotage administration. Abundant evidence of this will be found in Conference resolutions and speeches, reference to "seven point" policies and remarks at Executive meetings reported in *The Pilot*.

At the 56th Conference (1942) Sir John Inskip in his report stated, "It is hardly to be expected that pilotage administration will remain untouched in the aftermath of the war." also "... our minds must be open to the suggestion that the development of pilotage administration has not yet perhaps reached its final stage."

Mr. WEBB'S DREAM

At the same Conference Mr. B. C. Webb, the Chairman, "dreamed a dream," which on being interpreted meant, "... when you get an upheaval like to-day (the war) it seems that it is time a change took place in the pilotage world."

Again at an Executive Meeting on November 28th, 1945, Sir John drew attention to the possibility of Government action.

In turn nationalisation and centralisation loomed upon the horizon, to some pilots as ominous storm clouds, to others, as the dawn of a new era. In turn they receded, permanently or temporarily, who knows? There is, however, no doubt but that we were left with a sense of anti-climax, and suggestions that we put our own house in order brought about a spate of resolutions all aimed at the re-organisation of pilotage administration.

It would perhaps be fitting, if at this point we asked, what are we hoping to achieve from this re-organisation of pilotage administration.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL

Despite the pride which we feel at being members of an ancient and essential service, and despite the importance that status may have for its own sake and as means to an end, we should be deluding ourselves if we did not admit that any improvement we could achieve in pilotage administration would be directed to one end—fair remuneration coupled with reasonable conditions of service.

Although we could find agreement on our objective, a glance at Conference resolutions shows the devious and often conflicting means, coloured by the particular circumstances at their port of origin, suggested to achieve this end.

If we have compulsory pilotage need the first of the official "seven points" apply?

If we are to be paid on a salary basis, what does compulsory pilotage matter?

Pilot cutters to be owned by local authorities, or, maybe, central authorities, and so on.

The Secretary's report at the 58th Conference (1945) contained this passage:—

"The Pilotage Act, while bringing some order out of the chaos by providing machinery for the administration of pilotage, paid too little regard to certain matters with the result that there is little or no co-ordination, that for no apparent reason differences and varieties of practice and custom have grown up in the different ports whilst conditions of service and widely different ideas as to the remuneration which the pilots ought to receive, exist even in ports which are really comparable. All this leads to confusion and uncertainty."

"CONFUSION" TOO MILD A WORD

At the present time pilotage is assessed on gross tonnage, nett tonnage, draft and a permutation on all three. That is only one aspect. Add to it pensions, retiring age qualifications as they vary at the ports; superimpose on this short but formidable list the constant dissatisfaction over earnings, with its attendant rate "chasing," and confusion seems too mild a word.

In future policy the same confusion of aims persists.

Is it possible to reconcile the points of view, within the framework of our Association, of the larger and the smaller ports on compulsory pilotage? Are we satisfied to proceed with any policy without ascertaining the opinion of say Liverpool or the Firth of Forth?

Was this same confusion of aims the primary cause of the breakaways from the Association? There is no doubt that it is fostering suspicion between ports and unless checked there is the danger that it will divide us and we shall fall.

Supposing that we could resolve our differences, how would we put them into effect? What is the machinery at our disposal? Could we surmount that permanent obstacle, the Chamber of Shipping, always first in the field to oppose anything not in the interests of the shipowner, and a continuous brake on the Ministry of Transport? The Ministry is ham-strung by departmental policy which can only be altered by an edict from the Government itself. Who is to move the Government to act? Remember the attitude of the Ministry on the matter of the earnings formula.

Yet it is very apparent that we must forestall any outside body in taking the initiative in this matter of future policy.

To stop this aimless drifting, let us take the bold step and ask that a Departmental Committee be appointed, as in 1911, to:—

“enquire and report as to the present state of the law and its administration with respect to pilotage in the U.K., as to what changes, if any are desirable.”

The progress of such a committee would be slow, but at least it would give the Government an opportunity to deal with us after the arrears of legislation we hear so much about are cleared.

The Pilotage Act of 1913, sometimes referred to as the pilots' charter and the pilots' sheet anchor, emerged from the previous inquiry and made order of the chaos of the XIXth century. The time is ripe to review the position again and if conditions are as bad as we are continually insisting nothing but good can come from such an inquiry.

In place of confusion let us once more have order.

