

# The Pilot

(OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE UNITED KINGDOM PILOTS' ASSOCIATION)

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No. 3. Vol. 34

October, 1955

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## 68th CONFERENCE

OF THE ASSOCIATION

postponed from June, 1955

will be held in

*H.Q.S. WELLINGTON*

AT KING'S REACH, THAMES EMBANKMENT,  
LONDON

On OCTOBER 26 and 27, 1955

at 10 a.m. on each day

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Head Office of the Association:

SHANNON COURT, CORN STREET, BRISTOL

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C. D. GRIFFITHS, O.B.E., D.F.C., General Secretary and Solicitor  
to whom all communications are to be addressed

## CONFERENCE AGENDA

1. The Conference opens at 10 a.m. on October 26th.
2. Report of Secretary and Solicitor.
3. Debate on Report.
4. Balance Sheet and Accounts (see pages 4 and 5).
5. Resolutions brought forward or with the consent of the Executive Committee.
6. The Port Grouping Scheme—Current Position.
7. Level of Pilots' Earnings—National Negotiations.
8. Election of Officers.
9. Appointment of Auditors.
10. Place of next Conference.
11. Any other business.

### FOUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE VACANCIES

There are four vacancies on the Executive Committee to be filled.

One is caused by the retirement of Mr. J. T. Watson of Falmouth.

The other three are in accordance with Rule 11 which provides that three members who have been longest in office without re-election shall retire. As five were elected at the same time, the three were chosen by lot. They are:—

Mr. D. Grainger (*Humber*)

Mr. R. Marshall (*Tyne*)

Mr. W. E. Spencer (*Cinque Ports*)

They are eligible without nomination and have consented to stand for re-election.

In addition, the following nominations have been received:—

Mr. S. Green (*Barrow and Heysham*)

Mr. F. V. Janes (*Isle of Wight, Outward*)

Mr. R. B. Page (*Gravesend*)

Mr. H. Richman, O.B.E. (*Goole*)

### RESOLUTIONS

Notice has been received of the following resolutions:—

*From Mr. P. J. Hannan of the Medway:*

That a surcharge of 25% be imposed upon all pilotage rates and charges, when 50% or more of any service is rendered between the official times of sunset and sunrise.

That the surcharge above mentioned be imposed upon all pilotage rates and charges, resulting from services rendered on Sundays and public holidays.

*From Mr. D. H. Tate:—*

That this Association is in favour of the creation of a Pilots' Benefit and Pension Scheme on a national basis by the amalgamation of all capital sums now standing to the credit of pilots' benefit funds throughout the country and by the establishment of direct contributions from shipowners and pilots alike, and that the Executive Committee be instructed to take all appropriate action to implement such a proposal, if necessary by the introduction of legislation through the medium of the Association's Parliamentary Committee.

*From River Thames (Compulsory):—*

That all ships requiring the services of a pilot in a United Kingdom port, should send advance information of their E.T.A. to the pilot station concerned.

*From Isle of Wight (Outward):—*

That charges for extra work be not considered when assessing pilots' net earnings.

The Executive Committee will meet aboard *Wellington* on the afternoon of October 25th and, with the President, have been invited by the President of the Chamber of Shipping to a reception at the Savoy Hotel, in the evening.

After the business sessions on the first day of Conference, the U.K.P.A. will hold a reception in *Wellington* and at the close of Conference on the following day the President, Vice-Presidents and members of the Executive will be the guests of the Corporation of Trinity House.

## PORT GROUPING—Recent Developments

AT the July meeting of the Executive Committee one of the most important items on the agenda was Port Grouping: the Chairman's report on recent developments.

Mr. Griffiths told the Committee that he and Mr. Tate had had two purely informal meetings with the Chamber of Shipping recently, where they had been most hospitably received and entertained to lunch. In return, they had invited Messrs. H. E. Gorick, J. H. Horner and J. B. Greenwood to meet the Executive that day for a social and informal chat during the luncheon adjournment, but unfortunately it had coincided with a meeting of their Council which prevented them from accepting, but he had received a letter of appreciation expressing the hope that they could attend on some other occasion. Members of the Executive welcomed the idea of closer personal contact with the representatives of the ship-owners, and expressed the hope that fresh arrangements could be made for another occasion.

Mr. Tate reminded the members that at the last meeting of the Executive it was agreed that if it proved impossible to arrange a meeting with the Union, the Port Grouping Scheme should be delayed no longer but submitted to the Chamber with a view to the opening of early discussions. The meeting which

had been arranged with the Union had been postponed indefinitely at their request, and accordingly Mr. Griffiths had got into touch with the Chamber to arrange the discussions referred to. The object was to acquaint the officials of the Chamber fully and frankly, not only with the plans upon which the Association were working, but also with the difficulties experienced in arriving at a solution to the problem of earnings which came anywhere near meeting unanimous approval.

The discussion with the Chamber officials was not only informal but also confidential, and accordingly much of what Mr. Tate had to say was not for publication. It is, however, permissible to report that the Chamber of Shipping appeared genuinely interested in the scheme, in no sense hostile to its principles and undoubtedly anxious to work in close co-operation with the representatives of pilots in seeking an acceptable method whereby the question of earnings could be stabilised in some satisfactory manner.

When they left it was on the understanding that they would have another meeting after the scheme had received further consideration.

This subsequent meeting had taken place early in July, and it had been intimated that the President of the Chamber, Mr. A. I. Anderson, and the

Chairman of their Pilotage Committee, Sir Gibson Graham, intended to be present. Unfortunately, circumstances prevented this and, at the subsequent discussion the Chamber expressed the view that in the light of certain recent decisions on the question of rates, it was desirable that a meeting should be held at the Ministry of all interested parties, in order that the ship-owners could be given some guidance as to whether we were working on the right lines and to ascertain whether the Ministry and Pilotage Authorities would be prepared to indicate the broad principles along which they felt a suitable plan could be worked out.

While continuing to be entirely ready to co-operate, the officials of the Chamber felt that some such meeting should be held before discussing the matter further, for they were uncertain whether the time at present being devoted to an investigation of the scheme might not be entirely wasted.

In the circumstances, it was agreed that the Ministry should be approached with a view to convening an early meeting.

Mr. Griffiths told the Executive that after the meeting at the Chamber, Mr. Tate and he, at the invitation of the President went to the House of Commons, and Sir Peter asked to have particulars of how far they had reached with the scheme.

The Chairman: Our position seems to be that if we can get the Ministry to say it can be worked we are not going to get a lot of opposition from the Chamber of Shipping, but the mean level of earnings proposed for each group was a matter which remained entirely open.

Commenting on the granting of £1,650 for all London sections, Mr. Wynn said that this was probably the first time a Pilotage Authority had gone forward with a proposition wholeheartedly.

Mr. Slade asked what the position was with regard to the Union.

The Chairman replied that Mr. Griffiths and he had put the scheme to Mr. Bird, who however, seemed more concerned with "scrapping the Pilotage Act" and substituting the form of inquiry for the settlement of industrial wage disputes.

Mr. Griffiths said that the Union had been kept in the picture and Mr. Bird had been asked to arrange a full scale meeting with the U.K.P.A. Executive who would hold themselves in readiness to attend. Mr. Bird wrote saying that it was not possible for him to

arrange such a meeting. He was also invited to attend as an observer at the informal meetings at the Chamber of Shipping but was unable to do so.

The Chairman said the Union scheme was before the Chamber of Shipping some time ago and he understood that it was turned down.

The Executive approved the action of the Chairman and Secretary in going to the Chamber in an informal capacity.

On the proposition of Mr. Innes seconded by Mr. Slade it was agreed that at this stage meetings should be kept on an informal basis, and after some discussion it was agreed to leave it to the discretion of the Chairman to decide when it was necessary to call in other members of the sub-committee.

Mr. Marshall moved that the Chairman and Secretary should go to the meetings and Mr. Slade seconded, but Mr. Grainger favoured the whole of the sub-committee going.

In the end it was left to the discretion of the Chairman.

### SEAHAM HARBOUR

Earlier in the meeting of the Executive Committee, the position at Seaham Harbour was mentioned and Mr. Griffiths said he had written to Mr. Hudson pointing out that while the port could not be upgraded in the Group Scheme at the moment, all grading was provisional and it was with the principles of the scheme that the Executive were concerned. There had been no reply. Mr. Griffiths added that they did not want to lose ports, large or small, and he assured the Executive that when there was a resignation he did his utmost within reason to deal with it.

The Chairman said it was most unfortunate that they had to take on their shoulders the task which rightly lay with the Ministry of Transport and the Chamber of Shipping. "We are the big bad wolf" he added.

Mr. Spencer: We have no cure for it; we realised that this sort of thing would happen.

Mr. Innes: I am sure we have a Secretary who does not accept these things on their face value and does all he can to hold the Association together.

### 39 YEARS A MEMBER

We offer best wishes for good health and happiness in his retirement to Mr. R. V. PALMER, a popular and greatly respected London North Channel pilot. He was in the London service for 39 years and put in much good work as representative of the London pilots at Trinity House.

Mr. Palmer first went to sea in 1904, serving his apprenticeship in the four-masted barque *Samaritan*. Later he sailed as second mate of the full-rigged ship *William Mitchell*.

Joining the London Pilotage service and the U.K.P.A. in 1916, he became a member of the pilots' local committee in 1921 and served on it until he retired at the end of January this year.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOTES

MR. D. H. TATE presided at a meeting of the Executive Committee on board *H.Q.S. Wellington* on July 21, 1955. The others present were Messrs. H. J. Wynn, H. B. Eagle, J. H. Innes, M. M. Marshall, L. R. Slade, W. E. Spencer, J. B. Bennett, D. Grainger, D. Main, Bernard C. Webb, hon. treasurer, and C. D. Griffiths, solicitor and general secretary.

The President, Sir Peter Macdonald and Mr. J. T. Watson sent messages regretting that they could not attend.

### FINANCE

Mr. Webb reported on the financial position. He said that Mr. Griffiths had told him that membership was up and that enabled them to look at the position in a better frame of mind. They would now just about clear themselves which was very gratifying. With regard to Executive expenses, these had been high because of the extra visits to ports which should have been started far sooner. He thought it should be put to Conference that £2 a day was not enough to cover the expenses of members of the Executive; they gave their services and were out of pocket.

Mr. Griffiths said that during the past two or three months there had been a substantial increase in membership particularly from the North Channel and the River which was most gratifying. "We owe it to Mr. Griffiths" commented Mr. Wynn.

### CURRENT MATTERS

**Barrow and Fleetwood**—Mr. Griffiths dealt at length with the position arising from the new bye-laws. The pilots agreed to dispense with an informal inquiry as by common consent the proposal was to introduce a boarding and landing rate which had not hitherto existed and to adjust the schedule of pilotage charges to provide £1,000 per annum net for each pilot. The Ministry confirmed the bye-laws, but made a reduction of 10 per cent in the schedule of dues. In 1954 earnings were £941, but had the new bye-laws been in force the pilots would have had only £914 and their reaction to that could easily be imagined. A measure designed by Trinity House to bring about a much needed improvement had resulted in the pilots being worse instead of better off. They felt they had been most unjustly dealt with and to obtain a redress of their grievance had considered taking some other action. He had written to the Ministry saying that the pilots and the Association had difficulty in understanding the decision, since the Pilotage Authority and the Chamber of Shipping were

agreed that the earnings should be in the neighbourhood of £1,000. The Ministry replied that in coming to their decision they had taken into account all the relative factors including the anticipated development of the trade of the port in the near future, in particular, the opening of large blast furnaces. Mr. Green, the local secretary, had written to him saying that they had no confidence in this development for some time and when it came it would require the licensing of an additional pilot. Mr. Griffiths added that the Ministry had assured him that the pilots' anxieties were not well founded and that they would get the level of earnings they were aiming at. There was nothing the Executive Committee could do and he had done his best to explain the position to Mr. Green. Mr. Rawlings Smith was keenly aware of the situation and should anything occur at Barrow which might delay the opening of the blast furnaces the Association might go back to the Ministry and say they wanted the position reviewed.

Mr. Grainger asked why the Ministry had not waited until the blast furnace was started before making the reduction.

The Executive were in complete sympathy with the pilots concerned and asked Mr. Griffiths to keep in close touch with the position.

**Dartmouth**—The two pilots had been advised by Mr. Griffiths to approach the secretary of the sub-commissioners for an increase and to come to him if their request was refused.

**Falmouth**—Over four months had elapsed since the Chamber of Shipping had agreed to a level of earnings at £1,200 a year which the pilots had accepted. The Ministry had asked Trinity House to submit bye-laws to give effect to this decision and so long a delay seemed unaccountable and regrettable in the extreme. It would be another ten days or a fortnight before they came into operation.

**Gloucester**—This was one of the tiny ports that could not earn a living, Mr. Griffiths said. For a long time he had been trying to get them an increase. They made an application for an increase in rates and for a boarding and landing rate. An immediate increase which would bring them in 10 per cent was accepted and the difficult question of boats was to be investigated with a view to some administrative changes.

**Humber**—Mr. Grainger reviewed the position. An application was lodged on November 18 last year but the Authority procrastinated to such a degree that the pilots sent very carefully prepared observations to the Ministry and asked for an Inquiry at an early date. (*The Inquiry was held on September 15th and is dealt with on another page.*)



Replying to the Chairman who asked what the balance of the Pilot Fund was, Mr. Grainger said that there was a debit balance because of work carried out to improve pilots' accommodation. They managed to get the Authority to stand for £700 for this purpose last year but nothing came to the Benefit Fund.

Asked for details about pensions, Mr. Grainger said that the capital of the fund was some £90,000. A pilot retiring at the age of 55 or after 25 years' service was entitled to £2. 10s. a week—2s. per week per year of service. There was a separate scale for widows and children. In 1953 each pilot contributed £127 to the fund but last year it was only £112.

Reverting to the application to the Ministry Mr. Grainger said they were asking for £1,250 for the 90 first-class pilots.

The Chairman hoped that the Humber pilots would prove to the Ministry that £1,250 was the figure suggested under duress and make it clear that they did not consider it satisfactory to-day.

Mr. Griffiths expressed the view that the Humber pilots had a good case but the opposition was very strong.

**London.**—Mr. Griffiths reported that the level of £1,650 for the five main stations came into operation on June 28th. The effect on the membership of the U.K.P.A. had been most encouraging. All who were at the Inquiry, whatever their views, were most grateful to Mr. Rawlings Smith who presented the case admirably. The facts were carefully marshalled by him and put forward with great conviction. After the meeting was over, Mr. Griffiths said, he wrote formally on behalf of the Association to the Secretary of Trinity House saying how much they appreciated Mr. Rawling Smith's efforts and in reply had received a letter of thanks intimating that his communication had been brought to the notice of the Deputy Master.

A later item in the agenda, "Letter from Cinque Ports," was brought forward and discussed at this stage.

The letter from the Cinque Ports asked that a resolution should go before Conference regretting that the Association's solicitor was not instructed to represent the Cinque Ports at the Inquiry and asking that the cost of representation by another solicitor, amounting to £35 should be defrayed by the Association.

Mr. Spencer said that the Cinque Ports' men felt that they had been sold all along the line, both by the Association and the London Pilots' Council.

Mr. Griffiths said that the Cinque Ports' pilots were proposing that the funds of the Association should be devoted to supporting and opposing the same application.

Mr. Innes said that the Association represented the majority and the Chairman pointed out that the application was supported at the request of the London Pilots' Council, representing the five districts, which asked and obtained the recognition of the Association.

Mr. Grainger who regarded the Cinque Ports' proposal as "entirely illogical," proposed "That this Executive regrets it cannot pay the expenses of the Cinque Ports."

This was seconded by Mr. Innes and carried, Mr. Marshall not voting.

**Portsmouth.**—The position, Mr. Griffiths said, was similar in some respects to that at Barrow. He had been in touch with Mr. Rawlings Smith on the matter and there was no alternative except to watch results for six months and to take immediate steps in co-operation with Trinity House to make a further application if circumstances warranted it. The point here was that bye-laws had been published designed to increase the Shipping and Landing Charges. The Minister in confirming them, had reduced the proposed charges thereby depriving the pilots of the figure for net earnings aimed at.

**Preston.**—The application in this case was hanging fire. The necessity for an improvement in earnings and conditions was becoming a matter of increasing urgency but there were certain practical difficulties and it was a little difficult to see the best method of proceeding. The Association was working in close touch with Trinity House and was ready to take action in support of the pilots immediately a decision was arrived at.

**Southampton and the Isle of Wight.**—The Minister had agreed to an increase of 10 per cent in the pilotage dues for the Isle of Wight as an interim measure which would bring the net earnings up to £1,300 a year.

Mr. Eagle: And one extra man.

**South Shields.**—Mr. Marshall said they applied for a transport and a boarding and landing charge. There was an objection from the Chamber of Shipping but this had been withdrawn and the Minister's signature to the bye-laws was now awaited.

### SUPPORT FOR GOOLE

The Committee, on the proposition of Mr. Innes, seconded by Mr. Wynn, authorised Mr. Griffiths to support the Goole pilots in their application for an increase in the rates which were 60 per cent above basic to 100 per cent above. The aim was to get £1,250 per pilot for a reasonable number of ships, Mr. Griffiths said and the abolition of the ballast rate would make a considerable difference. The application had been submitted and the comments of the Chamber of Shipping had just been filed.

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## IN MEMORIAM

### JAMES S. LEARMONT

BY the death of CAPTAIN J. S. LEARMONT on August 31st, the Association has lost one of the stalwarts of days gone by. In the editorial archives for 1927 we came across the block here reproduced. It appeared in the Conference issue of *The Pilot* for that year when he was elected a vice-president of the U.K.P.A. in place of W. J. Davies of Swansea who had retired from the pilotage service. The picture shows the Jimmie Learmont we remember so well and it seemed when we last saw him in 1953 at Sir John H. Inskip's leave-taking on board the *Wellington* that time had not laid its hand too heavily upon him.

We then recorded of him that he was "radiating his old-time bonhomie," and we are sure it remained to the end.

Before joining the pilotage service in 1910 he spent 20 years in sail. He tried steam, but did not like it. Sail must have got into his blood when as a boy of eleven years he went coasting in his father's 46-ton schooner from Isle of Whithorn, N.B.—his "native village" he called it. Before he was 24 he was captain of a ship *Brenhilda* owned by J. & J. Rae & Company, and a few years later he had their biggest ship *Brenda*, which was burned in Valpanaiso. The company bought the *Pass of Branden*, renamed her *Bengaim* and put young Learmont in command. He and his first wife spent many happy days in these two fine ships and their first daughter was born at sea. From *Bengaim*, Capt. Learmont entered into the pilotage service and three years later moved to Dover where he served until 1932 when he was appointed Superintendent of Pilots at Harwich.

His years at Dover saw him not only a keen champion of the U.K.P.A. but a member of the Dover Town Council and vice-chairman of the Education Committee. In 1922 he was elected to the Executive Committee.

The appointment at Harwich inevitably brought his active service with the Association to an end, but there is no doubt that it kept a warm place in his heart. Turning over the pages of an old volume of *The Pilot* we came across a picture of him at the Jubilee Conference dinner (1934) at the old Holborn Restaurant leading sea shanties with Peter Dawson. In 1942 the Association made him an honorary vice-president.

He remained superintendent at Harwich until August, 1946, when he retired under the age limit. In his years of retirement he completed his book "Master in Sail" which we



had discussed with him many years before when it was only a rough manuscript.

In latter years he had made a cottage at Ardleigh, Essex, his home and it was there that he fell from a ladder in the garden. He suffered severe shock and pneumonia closed a memorable career. He was 80 years of age and leaves a widow who was his second wife, two daughters and a son.

Among those at the funeral at Ardleigh were Capt. J. Mackay representing the Elder Brethren of Trinity House; Mr. S. Rawlings Smith, Principal, Trinity House Pilotage Department; Capt. A. Hunter, superintendent of pilots at Harwich; Capt. John Grier, who was apprenticed in sail under Capt. Learmont and supplied the illustrations for "Master in Sail"; Mr. H. Robinson, North Channel pilot; Mr. L. S. Peverley, Outward pilot, Gravesend, and Capt. F. J. Bammant, retired pilot.

A wreath was sent from the President and members of the U.K.P.A.

### MR. WEBB'S BEREAVEMENT

MR. BERNARD C. WEBB has the sympathy of us all in the great loss he has sustained by the death of his wife which occurred on September 16th. Mrs. Webb was a cheery personality who brightened the social side of some pre-war Conferences, and was always keenly interested in the U.K.P.A. and its members. She was 73 years of age and they had been looking forward to the celebration of their golden wedding which was near at hand, but, alas it has been denied them.

## HUMBER INQUIRY

The Humber Inquiry took place on September 15th.

The case for the pilots was put by Mr. Griffiths who greatly appreciated the assistance he received from Mr. Grainger and his two colleagues, Messrs. Allman and Berry. He realised how much time and effort they gave to the preparation of the case and the compilation of a wealth of valuable statistics. Also, each of them made an extremely useful contribution during the course of the Inquiry.

Strong opposition was put up by the Authority and the shipowners.

The Ministry as usual gave a very fair hearing and the pilots came away with a feeling that for the first time for many years their affairs had had, at least, a sympathetic and impartial hearing.

The matter is now with the Minister for his decision.

## TRINITY HOUSE EXPERIMENT

THE Corporation of Trinity House, London, has placed with Messrs. John I. Thornycroft & Co. Ltd., an order for an experimental fast pilot launch. The design has been evolved between Trinity House and Messrs. Thornycroft, and is a departure from previous Trinity House practice. The launch is designed to ship the pilot direct from the shore to the vessel to be piloted and will accommodate up to 12 pilots for short periods.

The launch will be 70 ft. overall, with a beam of 15 ft. Her hull will be double skinned mahogany, heavily fendered, and she will be powered by twin Rolls Royce C.8 S.F.L.M. diesel engines, giving her a speed of 15 knots.

She will have twin screws and twin rudders and will be equipped with radar and both medium and very high frequency radio-telephone sets.

Delivery is expected within a year.

Executive Committee Notes continued from page 6

## AUTHORITY SECRETARY'S PENSION

Mr. Griffiths reported that in accordance with instructions at the last meeting of the Executive he wrote to the Chairman of the Middlesbrough Pilotage Authority concerning the pension they proposed to pay their Secretary. He had received a reasonably polite reply but they declined to give any information. The matter was one of considerable delicacy and he had consulted Sir John Inskip whose valued help was always so

## BRONZE MEDAL

### for Mr. D. Grainger

MR. DOUGLAS GRAINGER, Humber pilot and member of the U.K.P.A. Executive Committee, has been awarded a bronze medal for gallantry in saving life at sea.

A Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation notice recorded the incident as follows:—

"Mr. Grainger dived over the side of the pilot cutter *J. H. Fisher* to rescue Mr. Thomas Mulholland, a pilot apprentice, who had fallen into the sea during the transfer of pilots from a motor boat to the cutter. Mr. Mulholland was not a good swimmer and, being weighed down by heavy clothing, was soon in difficulties and was unable to reach the cutter which was drifting rapidly away.

"Mr. Grainger got hold of a lifebuoy, which had been thrown from the cutter, and swam with it for about 100 yards, through heavy seas to Mr. Mulholland, whom he supported in the lifebuoy until they were both picked up by a motor boat.

"At the time of the incident an easterly wind was blowing at gale force, and a strong ebb tide was causing high confused seas; the temperature was low and the water was icy cold.

"Had it not been for the prompt and courageous action of Mr. Grainger in very adverse conditions, Mr. Mulholland would undoubtedly have been drowned."

Mr. Grainger has also received a grandmother clock from the Humber Conservancy Board, whose Chairman, Mr. J. H. Haworth, made the presentation. The clock is inscribed with details of the rescue.

Thanking the Board, Mr. Grainger said that others took part in the rescue and he would always owe them a debt of gratitude. He was referring to the pilots and apprentices on the cutter who acted very promptly in dragging him and Mr. Mulholland back to safety.

Mr. Grainger was granted a King's Commendation in December, 1942, for brave conduct when his vessel *Loch Katrine* was sunk by enemy action.

readily available. Unless the Authority were prepared to change their attitude it might become necessary to apply for a bye-law under S. 18 of the Act.

On the proposition of Mr. Innes, the Executive approved the taking of such action by Mr. Griffiths as was necessary to meet the objections of the Middlesbrough pilots.

## CONFERENCE

The Conference dates were fixed and the Chairman said they hoped to have something concrete to report regarding Port Grouping.