

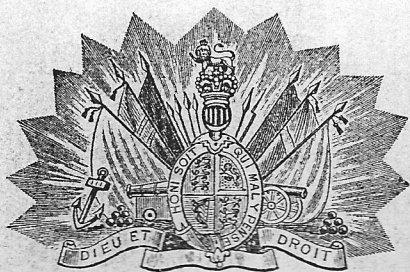
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REVISION AND APPEAL.

AFTER some little delay and slight adjustment the revision of the Chiefs' and Warrant Officers "Earnest Appeal" has been decided on by a majority vote of the branches, and it will be promulgated at an early date. So far as revision itself is concerned there has been but slight alterations in the wording, and none whatever in the spirit, of the Appeal which has held the field since the concessions of 1896, now nearly five years ago. There are two added clauses only, viz., that asking definitely for opportunities for young Warrant Officers to obtain substantive Lieutenant rank, for gallant or meritorious services, and the clause asking for compassionate allowances for Warrant Officers' children,—which are not at present allowed by the regulations. All else is practically the same. There is the clause asking for the establishment of a new rank approximating to that of Quartermaster and Ridingmaster in the Army. This clause is in the interest of the Chiefs, from whose lists officers to the new rank would be recruited, and fully rewarded by pay, emolument and pension for their long, faithful and oftimes, unrewarded meritorious services of their youth; when promotions and rewards for services in the field were not so much in the air as the work of the Association has made them during recent years. Not that it is anything like satisfactory at present, even though it has wonderfully improved during the last ten years by our constantly pegging away at the injustice and unwisdom of the old policy of letters of thanks and "noted at the Admiralty." If this rank is created it will at least provide a means of rewarding officers who are at present performing duties in dockyards and barracks and depôts, at home and abroad, with pay and position equal to the great

responsibilities they bear, and the service they perform for the country as Chief Gunners, Chief Boatswains and Chief Carpenters. We must all acknowledge that our seniors, the Chiefs, have the first claim, and and that they must have our first thought in the first clause of our new Appeal. But coupled with the old will come the young; for the branches have decided not to deny to the present young, and the coming generations of Warrant Officers, the opportunities of becoming substantive Lieutenants, if they can earn such a position, simply because those of the senior years never had such full opportunities in their junior days. To take up such a position, the majority of the members consider, would be unfair, unjust, and unworthy the men at present on the Chiefs' and Warrant Officers' lists. Rather do they believe that as the young men would like to see the seniors obtain their chance in a Honorary Lieutenantcy at the end of their career, so do the seniors heartily wish that the young men should obtain a substantive Lieutenantcy if they earned it and cared to accept it. These reciprocal good wishes between old and young have found expression in a common clause, which stands at the head of our new Appeal, and we hope and believe it will get that consideration from the authorities which its justice and expediency should promptly command.

After the old and young the middle-aged are catered for, in a clause which should also appeal very strongly to the authorities for immediate consideration. It was in the last Appeal and it is in this, viz., "that all deserving Warrant Officers should be promoted to Chief at 18 years seniority." Surely 18 years is sufficiently long in one rank to ask that the next step should then be secured, irrespective of the members already on the Chiefs' list. No other rank of officers are called upon to serve anything like that time in one rank, if they are at all deserving and have not had a slip of some sort or other. Why then should Warrant Officers stand alone in this matter? They are not the least useful or the least hard-working among the officers of Her Majesty's Navy; and they ask that they should not be the least rewarded for long and deserving services. To be sure of obtaining one's Chiefship at 18 years seniority is little enough, in all conscience, to look forward to after such a period in one rank. But that little would be gratefully received and prevent many an old servant of the Crown being sent into retirement without ever having reached the Chief rank, and secured for himself and family the privileges which he struggled so hard to obtain, and

which he so richly deserved, been gained by him after total services, in all ranks, often approaching to nearly 40 years. So reasonable, so just, so moderate a request, as that of being promoted to Chief at 18 years seniority, should, then, command both sympathy and help and eventually be granted and become a boon and blessing to our middle-aged men.

The next request gives more definite expression to a somewhat ambiguous clause in the previous Earnest Appeal where opportunities are asked for Boatswains and Carpenters to obtain extra pay for extra subjects, etc. These latter officers have now obtained their wish that this request should take a more definite shape, and that fixed and special amounts of pay and allowance should be named so that there should be no doubt as to what is desired. This is no new clause, therefore, but only a more definite wording of a similar clause in the old Appeal. Another clause in favour of the young men is that which has been removed bodily from the old to the new Appeal, viz., that asking that a young officer may receive 6/- per diem during his first five years in the warrant rank, instead of 5/6 which he at present receives. This request can be backed by very strong arguments indeed, for a young officer is very heavily handicapped during his first five years of service as Gunner, Boatswain or Carpenter, in having his expenses increased ten-fold by his new position, whereas his pay is but slightly increased from the amount he received as a Petty Officer. Such a state of affairs does not need dwelling upon, it is so obvious that if it cannot be seen it can be felt, even by the veriest tyro in matters naval.

The last, but by no means least, clause of a very moderate and modest Appeal requests that the children of Warrant Officers may receive compassionate allowance. Here, again, we are on the solid ground of seeking only that allowed to the children of other ranks of officers, and it must be allowed that the necessitous children of a Warrant Officer should command as much compassion from the country their father has served as do those of any other rank of officers. Why the line was drawn at the Warrant rank we cannot comprehend, unless it was that the W.O.'s had no friends to look after their interest and were too negligent to do it for themselves. Anyhow, it is not too late to rectify a mistake, of however long standing, and we should set about this in real earnest. Practically this last is the only new principle in the new Earnest Appeal; so it is the only *new* thing we have to tell our naval officer shipmates, or our advocates in Parliament. The *principle* of giving substantive Lieutenant rank has always been within the advocacy of our former Appeals, and besides that the Admiralty have insisted on keeping that door open, whether we liked it or no, as the promotion of Lieutenants Webber, Cathie and Sims amply testifies. The fear, then, that we have to teach our naval officer shipmates and our advocate something new, in this matter of promotion from the ranks, is a mistake. Many of our advocates, with Mr. Gibson Bowles at their head, never cease to advocate that line of promotion—and they advocate that line alone—in spite of all we say to the contrary.

With these advocates and the active and exemplified policy of the Admiralty—so late as the case of Lieut. Sims—dead against us, it would, the majority of the members think, be a mistake if they did not put forth their full strength to secure the younger men the full opportunities—quicken and multiplied—the Admiralty already offer them, even as they expect the young men to do all in their power to bring about the creation of Honourary Lientenancies for a per centage of our present Chiefs. And Warrant Officers of all ranks and ages should, they think appeal for help to our senior naval officers whenever reasonable opportunities present themselves. There is nothing new to tell them, except about the compassionate allowances, for they know and understand about substantive rank, and since the introduction of Supplementary Lieutenants into the Fleet, there has been a vast change of opinion in regard to the claims of our class among naval officers of all grades from the Admiral to the Engineer. And this one clause that contains the only new principle in the Appeal, viz., that of compassionate allowances for our children, only needs, the members believe, to be stated to obtain the sympathy and help of our senior naval officers.