PLEASE

DO

GANING OF BOYS IN THE NAVY.

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To O.M

10th July, 1931.

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THANK YOU
The rules at present governing caning as a summary punishment in the Royal Navy are as follows - "Art. 535, Clause 2, R.N. & A.I.:

"535. "

2. "CANNING on the breast with clothes on is "limited to boys rated as such and to Boy Naglers "and Band Boys whom embarked and is to be inflicted "with a light and ordinary cane. The number of "cuts or blows is not to exceed 12, and the "punishment is not to be carried out in public. "Canning is intended for various offences of "theft, immorality, desertion, "in special cases as a sort of leniency, "insubordination and deliberate or continued "disobedience of orders. In the absence of the "Captain, the Commanding Officer is not to order "canning to be inflicted, unless the Captain shall "be absent from duty by permission of superior "authority for more than 24 hours."
In the boys training establishments, there is a further limitation that not less than 6 cuts must be awarded, the object being to emphasize the fact that the award of caning as a punishment is restricted to the more serious offences.

The regulations in their present form date back to 1912, when the question of caning was considered very fully by the board on the report of the Arctic Committee on Naval Discipline. That Committee reported as follows:

"150. The Committee have devoted much attention to the question of the punishment of boys who misconduct themselves; in their opinion it is necessary that there shall be some means of correction which, while not having any bad results on interfering with their course of training, will act as a deterrent."

"151. The number of military punishments which can be inflicted on boys is very limited, and, apart from caning, almost the only means of dealing with the troublesome boys is by treating them as men and giving them punishments which in many cases involve their association with the bed charges of the ship; this invariably leads to the neglected considering themselves/
themselves as a good, and does more harm than a good. Most of the other punishments are protracted and are likely to cause the boys to brood, and for this reason they are objectionable. Statistics which have been compiled show that there has been no increase in the ratio of punishments to numbers borne for the Navy as a body, and though the ratio in the case of the Navy has diminished practically the same until 1900 (in which year the restrictions on caning were introduced), since that year it has increased by over 40 per cent. It is thus evident that the other punishments adopted in lieu of caning were quite ineffective.

155. It appears to be the opinion of the petty officers that the behaviour of the boys in the service has deteriorated considerably since the restrictions on caning have been in force, that boys are not as amenable to discipline, and that they do not treat their superiors with as much respect as formerly. No doubt this in partly due to the fact that discipline in all grades of life ashore is more lax than it was, and that boys consequently enter the service with very little idea of obedience or deference to those in authority over them; but as far as the Navy is concerned in the present way, men are distributed in small parties in separate compartments in many cases without constant control by a superior, strict discipline and unflinching obedience are more essential than ever.
"153. The committee have diligently sought for any convincing reason for the objections which have been made to this form of punishment, but have been unable to discover one. They have, however, received from all classes in the Navy practically unanimous testimony as to the value of caning as a deterrent, and the manner in which this testimony was given was in their opinion sufficient to convey an unprejudiced person how little thinking about the punishment to which objection could be taken, and that, while it left no bad results, it was sufficiently unpleasant to induce those who received it to hesitate before committing themselves again. The committee have received direct evidence to this effect and also to the fact that other punishments may be inflicted on boys again and again without good results."

"154. They, therefore, have arrived at the conclusion that, after all, by far the most suitable punishment is for. They recommend that the order directing the punishment to be inflicted in private should remain in force, but there is an anomaly in regard to caning which in the opinion of the Committee should
"should be referred to the fact
"that the regulations at present direct that
"flogging is only to be inflicted under
"the actual order of the Captain, though the
"Commanding Officer in the absence of the
"Captain has full power with regard to the
"award of all other punishments, and they
"submit that this regulation should be
"removed. It has been recommended by some
"officers that the executive officer, if of
"the rank of Commander, should be authorised
"to inflict this punishment up to six cuts
"without the necessity of obtaining the
"Captain's order in every such case, and the
"Committee are in favour of this proposal.
"They further recommend that all boy ratings
"under the age of 16, including marines,
"should be eligible to be caned."
The attention of the Board had previously been drawn to the large increase in the percentage of the total number of cuttings awarded to boys in the years prior to 1912, referred to in paragraph 151 of the Committee's report.

The Board, however, were unable to accept the view of the Committee that there should be power to delegate the award of this punishment to the Commander whenever the Captain was absent, but they agreed that in the absence of the Captain from duty by sickness, ill-health or authority for more than 48 hours, the officer in command might order the punishment to be inflicted. They also decided to make general the rule (previously applied only to the Training Service) that canings should only be awarded for the more serious offences enumerated in Art. 535(2).

Statistics have been prepared showing the percentages of canings awarded in the last five years in the boys' training establishments, and the total number of punishments awarded to boys, to the average number of boys borne.

Figures for the training establishments for 1928, 1929, and 1930, have also been obtained, as well as for typical ships of the Atlantic and Mediterranean Fleets.
These figures which are given in Table A attached, do not enable any very definite conclusions to be drawn, though they show that, while both canings and punishments generally have increased in the Training Establishments between 1926 and 1929, the canings fell considerably last year, but the total punishments increased. In the Training Squadron both canings and punishments have decreased. The number of boys in ships other than the training squadron is so small that much importance should not be attached to the figures in their case. Figure 1 is a thing worked out for typical ships before the war showed an average of 67% for a period of 4 years, so that the present day percentages, which only in one case exceed 50%, are relatively lower.
There are, however, important differences as between ship and ship and establishment and establishment for which there seems to be no very satisfactory reason, even allowing for the human element. Thus, both canings and punishments in the ST. VINCENT for 1927-29 years were appreciably higher than in the GANGES, and particularly so in 1929, when it would be expected that the former establishment would have seen its high-water mark, although canings in the ST. VINCENT have fallen to about the same level as in the GANGES, total punishments are still much heavier. In the Training Squadron in 1927 there were in the MARLBOROUGH only 17 canings during the year for an average total of 306 boys (5.5%) and in the EMPEROR OF INDIA 160 canings for an average total of 337 boys (44.5%). In 1928 there were 20 canings in the MARLBOROUGH for 290 boys (7.2%) and the EMPEROR OF INDIA for 0 canings in the EMPEROR OF INDIA for 210 boys (32%), although the EMPEROR OF INDIA had given total punishments. The EMPEROR figures are considerably below those of the other establishments, but this would be expected in view of the different type of boy entered.

There/
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"or gross and continued disobedience of orders" for the present wording — this would secure that a first offence is not so punished — but the other offences mentioned "theft, immorality, drunkenness, desertion and insubordination" hardly call for any disqualification.

Apart from this, the differences in the number of cautions awarded in different units in punishments might be pointed out confidentially and Commanding Officers instructed to use every endeavour to keep down the number as much as possible; also Commanders-in-Chief could be told when examining the punishment returns, to draw attention to any cases where the numbers seem to be abnormally high or where the punishment has been awarded for offences not specified in the regulations.

10th July, 1932.
case in 1928. The report by the Army Council states, however, that over 50% of the court-martial cases each year have been awarded for the offence of smoking, which is direct disobedience of orders, and probably, the same occurs in other establishments. It may be that only the very bad cases are so dealt with, but there appears to be a loophole here in the working of Art.335 - deliberate or continued disobedience of orders - in that small offences against standing orders or regulations is to be regarded as deliberate disobedience of orders. The regulation might be strengthened by substituting: