

WHAT IS MEAP?

BY

'SECRETARY'

This is an age when to be 'with it' one has to learn new sets of initials which describe policies, or substances (otherwise unpronounceable), Acts legal and illegal, not to mention groups and committees. Some form words which roll easily off the tongue and fit conveniently into verse, and thus form useful stock-in-trade for those of satirical bent. So no apologies are made for introducing another set.

MEAP stands for the Marine Engineering Advisory Panel. The reasons for its existence stem from the need to set the standards required of marine engineer officers and ratings in doing their job, for making rules for the operation and safety of machinery, and for giving guidance about the organization of the department in ships. The Director of Marine Engineering has responsibilities for setting standards under D.C.I.607/65; in practice, however, they are much affected by a combination of:—

- (a) The training and examination syllabuses for officers and ratings
- (b) The design of machinery and equipment
- (c) The conditions under which this machinery and equipment must be operated in ships
- (d) The time allowed and the amount of outside assistance available to ships for maintenance
- (e) The complement of officers and skilled and semi-skilled ratings in ships.

So obviously many different authorities contribute to the standards achieved. As a means of getting a wide range of views and experience on the various problems and to help him to formulate advice, D.M.E. set up MEAP under his chairmanship. The members are:—

- Director of Naval Engineering Training
- Deputy Director of Fleet Maintenance
- Deputy or Assistant Director of Marine Engineering who undertakes training and personnel responsibilities
- C.S.O.(T) to Flag Officer Sea Training
- Fleet Marine Engineer Officer, Home Fleet
- The Captain, H.M.S. *Sultan*.

Advice on matters concerning shipwright officers and artificers is conveniently available from the Senior Shipwright Officer in the Naval Group of the Ship Department.

Action on matters agreed in discussion can often be pursued by the member most directly concerned, acting through his own organization, thus saving time and effort.

Typical current problems are:—

- (a) The changing duties of ratings caused by the fitting of automatic and remote controls
- (b) Changes in craft skills needed as machinery becomes more complex while better spare gear provision reduces the workshop task
- (c) The need for greater expertise in diagnosing faults, e.g., by means of performance checks and methodical examination
- (d) How to ease the pressure on officers and ratings in ships.

The advice given on these matters should help to ensure that marine engineering policies and standards meet the changing conditions in the Fleet.

You may say why have a Panel and feel there is some truth in the saying: 'Committees are composed of individuals who singly can do nothing and meet to decide that nothing can be done', however, the 'put everything on paper' ploy (P.E.O.P. for your collection) can often lead to dog-eared docket full of lengthy and conflicting minutes, which alternate between being the courier's regular companion on the London-Bath run and periods of going broody in the deep-litter of an 'in tray'. So, despite having to write the minutes, I feel MEAP serves a useful purpose.