
VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE.

MARINE OFFICERS.

By FRANK P. HELM, Director of Navigation, and HENRY B. MCCOY, Insular Collector of Customs.

QUALIFICATIONS.

Best age for entering the occupation.—The best age for entering the occupation of marine officer is from 21 to 24 years. A young man entering the merchant marine at this age will be better able to adapt himself to the element of strict discipline, which is recognized as a fundamental part of the career of marine officers.

Educational attainments which prospective officers should have.—A prospective officer should have at least a common-school education, supplemented by a good knowledge of arithmetic, algebraic formulas, nautical astronomy, meteorology, and international rules and signals—familiarity with all of these subjects being a prerequisite for advancement in this profession.

Physical and personal requirements.—A prospective officer should possess a sound body, his hearing and eyesight should be excellent, and his ability to distinguish colors should be absolutely infallible. In addition, he should be polite, tactful, and courageous, and particular at all times in the matter of his personal appearance.

Opportunity for continuation of training for advancement.—After two years at school and eighteen months at sea, students may take an examination for a license, provided they have served one year at sea as a quartermaster. During the eighteen months' training at sea, they will be instructed in the handling of vessels in various positions, magnetism as it affects the compass, the handling and stowage of different cargoes, handling of men, and, above all, navigation.

At the present time there are 392 vessels operating in the coast-wise trade of the Philippine Islands which require licensed officers, and the number of such vessels is increasing annually. The opportunity for continuation of training for advancement is excellent. The progress of a young officer depends only upon the amount of zeal with which he applies himself to his immediate duties and qualifies for promotion by observation and continued study.

THE OCCUPATION.

Nature of the occupation.—The nature of the occupation itself compares favorably with any other profession that a young man might elect to follow. The work is dignified and important and is steady throughout the year. It is very much more healthful than sedentary occupations that require a man to spend most of his time at a desk in an office. The officers are always in the open air, and no life is more healthful than the life at sea. There are no special dangers in the Philippine Islands, with the exception of occasional typhoons, which are usually mastered by officers who are both capable and cautious.

Owing to the fact that trade in the Philippine Islands is entirely coastwise, vessels are continually in and out of port and this feature of the work does away with any chance of strain or monotony.

The duties and responsibilities of the various positions on board the ship are well defined, and, except in cases of emergency, each officer has only his own prescribed work to perform. The work is varied and interesting, and a young man who enters this field will find an occupation in every respect worthy of his utmost endeavor.

Divisions of work involved.—The principal duties of a noncommissioned officer in the merchant marine are to check cargo on and off the vessel at the various ports of call, to superintend the proper handling and stowage of cargo, to make out the manifests of cargo carried on board the vessel, and to be on the bridge when going in and out of port, keeping a watch with the regular watch officer.

After obtaining a license, the student's first appointment will be that of third officer. This officer, in port, has charge of the quartermasters and wheelhouse; if on a passenger steamer, he will be at the gangway on arrival and departure of passengers; he will have charge of No. 1 hold, and it will be his duty to see that stevedores do not break or broach the cargo, and that it is properly dunnaged and stowed. On arriving at and leaving port, he will be on the bridge with the captain, handling the engine-room telegraph and keeping time of the same. At sea he will stand the captain's watch of four hours on the bridge and eight hours off. It will also be his duty to attend to such clerical work as the chief officer may require. After one year's duty as third officer, he will be eligible for license as a second officer.

The second officer, while in port, has charge of the afterend

of the vessel while working with cargo, and it is his duty to see that it is properly dunnaged and stowed. He also has charge of the afterend of the vessel while docking. At sea he has charge of the ship and assists the captain in navigating—on large vessels he is the navigating officer. After serving one year as second officer, he may apply for examination for the chief mate's license.

The chief mate has general charge of the ship and all officers and men, and, during the absence of the captain, he has command of the ship. After serving one year as chief mate, he may go up for examination for a master's license.

Opportunities for advancement.—The opportunities for advancement from one position to another are all that could be desired. Continued advancement in the service can be assured to those who are willing and quick to learn. Advancement is usually made by regular promotion, but depends to a great extent on the aptitude, ability, and willingness of the officer to study. By applying himself, an officer may obtain a higher license from year to year until he attains that of master. The opportunities for advancement in the Philippine Islands are excellent, since at the present time there is a scarcity of officers and an increasing demand for vessels. The shipping industry has a brilliant future, as the domestic commerce of the Philippines is increasing rapidly every year. Agriculture is being developed and sawmills are being established in different parts of the Islands. In a country like the Philippines, composed of thousands of small islands, transportation and trade by water will always be one of the leading industries. More ships are steadily needed to handle this growing trade.

Pay.—In addition to their salaries, all officers are furnished with subsistence and comfortable quarters on board their vessels. This enables them to curtail their living expenses to a minimum and to save sufficient money to permit them to live in comfort and ease upon retirement from the service.

The following table shows the usual salaries paid to officers per month in the Philippine coastwise trade, although the masters of certain vessels engaged in this trade receive salaries of ₱440 per month:

First-class vessels.

Captain	₱250
Chief officer	153
Second officer	105
Third officer	80

Second-class vessels.

Captain	₱210
Chief officer	123
Second officer	₱80 to 105

Third-class vessels.

Captain	₱190
Chief officer	113

Captains of first-class vessels are paid the sum of ₱25 per month in addition to their regular salaries. Captains of second and third-class vessels receive ₱15 per month over and above their regular pay. This extra compensation is in the nature of a bonus, and the practice of allowing the same is general as far as the ships in the Philippine Islands are concerned. Captains sometimes acquire a financial interest in the business of the vessels under their command, and in this way are able to add materially to their incomes.

COMMENTS.

A boy should not enter upon the vocation of a marine officer with the idea that his life will be one of ease and luxury. Sea life involves a considerable amount of discipline and, at times, very hard work, combined with many dangers, the majority of which can be avoided by an officer well versed in his vocation.—FRANK P. HELM, Director of Navigation.

I have seen young men rise within five years' time from mere noncommissioned officers at an allowance of ₱20 per month to the rank of captain, and captains generally leave their positions in good financial condition.—J. M. POIZAT, President of the Philippine Shipowners' Association.

[NOTE.—This is the fourth of a series of articles on Vocational Guidance. Other articles on this subject have been published in the October, November, and January numbers of THE PHILIPPINE CRAFTSMAN.]

The public, in giving support to manual training and the household arts, undoubtedly intends these subjects to promote closer relationship between the school and vocational life; some teachers of these subjects unquestionably do use them with precisely this intent; but efficient instruction presupposes something definite to teach and a consistent way of teaching it.—*Selected.*