

The Case for Revision of Routing

from W. L. S. Harrison

ON page 533 of the October 1970 issue of the *Journal* (23, 4), the following passage appears:

'At a recent meeting of the Safety of Navigation Committee of the Board of Trade, those present were advised by the Mercantile Marine Service Association that they had independently circulated a simple form of the present plan and the proposed reversal of routing to some 2300 Masters of their Association. Of the 500 replies received at that time, two-thirds supported the plan for reversal'.

In the view of the M.M.S.A. Council, the expression 'two-thirds' reflects an overstatement of the proportion of members of the Association who support the plan for reversal of the traffic flow in the Dover Strait. For the sake of strict accuracy, the following figures should be taken into account when assessing the results of this ballot: 574 forms were returned (about 25 per cent of those sent out) of whom 206 (36 per cent) were in favour of the Imco modifications suggestion and 368 (64 per cent) were in favour of the Trinity House (reversed flow) proposal. Taking only those members commanding ships of over 30 ft. draught and regularly using the Strait, however, 120 (40 per cent) favoured the Imco suggestion and 176 (60 per cent) the Trinity House proposal.

In the view of the M.M.S.A. Council, it was the expression of opinion of those Masters commanding ships of the greatest draught and regularly using the Strait which should be regarded as being most significant, and which reveals that members were almost equally divided on this issue.

Collisions Between Very Large Ships

P. C. H. Clissold

WE have not yet heard the full story of the *Pacific Glory-Allegro* collision and it may be jumping the gun to make any comment, but one thing seems to be clear about the handling of very large single-screw ships. Because of their unwieldiness an avoiding action must be initiated while still at a considerable distance from the threat, if it is to have any effect. This distance is beyond that at which the

eye of a navigator can accurately assess the risk of collision or the need to manoeuvre. He must, therefore, depend upon instrumental information for making his decisions; in other words, in clear weather as in thick, he must use his radar and plot continuously if he is not to hazard his ship. If the argument is put forward that this will require two men on watch together and that the state of manning does not permit this to be done, the answer is that a change in organization must be made to make it possible.

Watch Keeping at Sea

from Captain P. A. Thompson

THE two following incidents might be of interest as an example of situations which arise today, and which well illustrate the standard of seamanship and watchkeeping which are encountered.

On Wednesday, 28 October, at 1700 hours, zone time, and in broad daylight with clear weather, we were proceeding in ballast on a course of 024° in the southern part of the Mozambique Channel when we had to take avoiding action because of a bulk/ore carrier of about 50,000 tons deadweight which was approaching our port side on a steady bearing, on a course of approximately 070° . The vessel was [name provided] of Liberian register and believed to be of Greek ownership, and passed blithely on its way. No sign of any watchkeeper could be seen on the bridge. It is, of course, quite possible that at this time he had gone below for his evening meal; such habits are apparently not unknown.

On Sunday, 15 November, at 1030 hours, zone time (G.M.T. + 3 hr.) in Lat. 3° S. and Long 47° E. on a course of 207° , when a Japanese cargo ship of about 12,000 tons deadweight on a course of about 260° , in perfectly clear weather, approached from our port side and passed ahead of us at a distance of a little less than one mile. Although we were not called upon to take action in this case, had the other vessel had an engine breakdown or steering failure whilst still on our port bow it is doubtful if she could have kept clear. It is also debatable whether we could have taken avoiding action in sufficient time to avoid collision, bearing in mind that the distance of advance of a vessel of this size, 209,000 tons deadweight, when turning at full speed and under full rudder is of the order of 3 to $3\frac{1}{2}$ cables.

It is this type of carelessness and indifference that rules are of little use against, and against which one must be constantly on guard. People who will act in this manner in clear weather are equally capable of being just as irresponsible and proceeding at full speed in fog, with complete disregard for the safety of both themselves and others.