

## 'The Master is Responsible'

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MUCH is being done to ease the burden on the Master approaching ports, and lane separation is the main thing. It would appear that the next logical step would be to penalize Masters who do not conform to the laid down traffic pattern.

It may be argued that the imposition of a penalty will be adding to the danger of a congested port approach, inasmuch as the Master will be worrying about the consequence of a wrong decision; such worrying may tend to cloud judgment.

However all Masters understand the correct 'port approach' technique and that therefore all other vessels will comply with such rules. A case for the imposition of a penalty is shown by the marked reluctance of some Masters to follow the lane patterns. I am speaking from experience when I say that I have seen vessels in the approaches to New York, Delaware River and San Francisco where charts show plainly approach and departure routes, deliberately steaming the wrong way in the laid down routes. It would appear that deliberate flaunting of safety features needs penalization of the person responsible, i.e. the Master.

However, before legislation can be enacted for such a penalty, it will be necessary for legislation to be enacted whereby strict conformance to the laws of approach and departure from a port is law, and not, as at present, recommended. While these routes are only recommended some Masters will still 'corner cut'.

This then gives rise to a case for Certificates of Competency for Port Approaches and Sea Lane Discipline. If, as present conditions seem to predict, a large build up of traffic in major port approaches can be foreseeable, and lane separation becomes law, such a certificate will ensure safety. If as suggested, English will be the language chosen for v.h.f./u.h.f. 'talk in' then a certificate will be issued only on the candidate's knowledge of that language and his knowledge of the rules for port approach/departure, sea lanes and his ability to order his vessel according to voice instructions, and to be able to pass concise information regarding his own vessel's position, course, speed, &c. Such a certificate would need to be produced to the relevant Port Authority for the issuance of clearance. At the same time it should also be law that the certificate is of an international standard, and no other equivalent certificate should be allowed.

Centres for sitting for such certificates should be in three major cities only, New York, London and Tokyo, such certificates being additional to the certificates issued by the maritime nations for competency as Masters and Mates.

It is suggested that the Institute of Navigation could play a leading role in the furtherance of such a scheme, an invitation to large tonnage operators representatives for a meeting to discuss the advisability of such a certificate, and to allow their sea-going personnel to accept training in the techniques of port approach, &c. and the sitting of such an examination. Safety would be the keynote for such a certificate.

With regard to the personnel required as Examiners, an Extra Master is not necessary. A Master with recent command experience and au fait with modern ship handling should, with the minimum of training, be able to conduct such an examination.