

INSERTION ON CHARTS OF SOUNDINGS TAKEN FROM ORIGINAL FOREIGN CHARTS.

A recent investigation carried out by the International Hydrographic Bureau has led the Directing Committee to suppose that different methods are adopted by Hydrographic Offices when inserting soundings on their charts taken from original Foreign Charts in cases where, for the same stretch of coast, it may be necessary to utilise soundings taken from the original charts of different countries using different datums. The question arises as to (a) whether these foreign soundings have been reduced to the datum adopted on the charts of the Country issuing the chart in question or (b) whether they have been inserted as shown on the Foreign original chart concerned (after having of course been converted to the standard of measurement adopted by that country).

Mariners might reasonably expect that all soundings shown on a chart were referred to one and the same datum, but enquiries so far made have shown that this is not generally so in the cases mentioned above, the usual method adopted being that shown in (b), *i. e.* that the soundings are reduced to different datums, the reduction level for the various areas concerned being quoted in the Title of the Chart. There are, however, certain exceptions to this rule as, for instance, in the case of large scale charts issued by the French Hydrographic Office of areas where this method would involve discontinuity of the contour lines, in which cases all the soundings are reduced to the same datum; for instance on French Chart No 5513 the Belgian soundings have been converted and referred to the level of Lowest Low Water (the datum adopted on French charts); also the Hydrographic Office of the United States of America occasionally when making a correction to an area which is a minor part of an entire chart, may alter the soundings in order to reduce them to the datum already used on that chart, and presumably the same is done by other countries.

The International Hydrographic Bureau would be interested to receive further information on this question for publication in the "Review", and in order that the matter may be considered for discussion at the next International Hydrographic Conference.

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