



CORRESPONDENCE REFERRING TO ARTICLES
PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

USE OF THE WORDS

“HYDROGRAPHY” AND “HYDROGRAPHER”.

(Vol. I, No 1, page 59)

THE Bureau has received the following letter from the Director of the Hydrographic Service of the French Navy :

(Translation from the French text).

In France the term ‘Hydrography’ lends itself to confusion on account of the different acceptations of the word.

1. — It has been used as a synonym for the word “Navigation” from every ancient times.

One of the oldest works on navigation is called “*Traité d’Hydrographie du Père Fournier*”.

The schools where officers of the Merchant Marine are trained, and which were founded by Colbert in the 17th Century, were called “*Ecoles d’Hydrographie*”. It is but quite recently that the name “*Ecoles de Navigation Maritime*” was adopted; nevertheless the instructors have retained the title of “*Professeurs d’Hydrographie*”.

However it is not astonishing that, in olden times, the two terms “Navigation” and “Hydrography” were confused, for charts were exclusively the results of discoveries and observations made by Navigators. In those days it was very rare that proper surveys were undertaken; on return from a voyage the documents, *etc.* collected by the Navigators were handed to Cartographers who studied and compared them and, from them, constructed charts, usually on very large scales. These Cartographers were designated “Hydrographes” in order to

distinguish them from the "géographes"; hence the name "Hydrographie" for the science which they built up gradually and which, therefore, was not clearly differentiated from navigation.

2. — The expression "Hydrographie" is used also to indicate the entire fluvial system of a country and, consequently, the adjective "Hydrographique" is employed for everything connected therewith. However, the designation "Hydrographe" is not used for those studying this subject.

3. — A new basis for confusion has been introduced since Oceanography has become an important science of extended application, for it includes a great many subjects which are included in Hydrography; it might even be said that it includes all of them except surveys for, and construction of, charts, or (in other words) *marine cartography*. The "Hydrographe", however, will have to study, more and more, some of the subjects which, up to now, were almost exclusively in the sphere of Oceanography: *e. g.* the determination of the density of sea-water and of currents at all depths in which submarines can navigate.

Thus at present, there is frequent confusion between the two sciences.

Conclusion. — To sum up: — As the most important work of "Hydrographes" is the production of charts, the true designation of the Public Department, the work of which is carried out by them, should be "Service de la Cartographie Maritime". However it is preferable to retain the present name which is understood and known by all concerned, both seamen and hydrographic Surveyors.

THE NORWEGIAN UNIT OF DISTANCE AT SEA.

THE Bureau has received the following letter from the Chefen for Norges Sjøkartverk:

With reference to the proposed alteration of the Norwegian unit of distance at sea (pages 34 and 35 the Hydrographic Review Vol. I, N° 1, 1923) wherein I maintained that it was of vital interest to a seafaring nation, such as Norway, to adopt an exact and invariable unit for distances at sea corresponding to that of other countries, I have the honour to inform you that my reasoned statement has met with the approval not only of all maritime concerns throughout the country, but also of the Government and Parliament.

The question has now been solved and the expressions *sjömil* and *kvartermil* are now banished from speech and writing in all maritime affairs — and in lieu of the said nomenclature the *nautisk mil* (of 1852 meters) has been established and sanctioned by law (29th of June 1923 — Law Gazette N° 25).

In conformity with this law I have caused the following announcement to be made from my office : —

In conformity with the Act of 29th June 1923 distances at sea will be given in future in all publications of the Norges Sjøkartverk in nautiske mil (1852 meters). Minor distances will be given in meters and cables, as before.

At the same time the expressions sjömil, kvartermil and minutes will be done away with as distances at sea in all Norwegian Notices to Mariners.

N. B. Thus 1 *sjömil* on the Norwegian charts already published is equivalent to 4 nautiske mil. This will be corrected gradually as the plates come under “*large correction*”.

