

She Sends You

By HELEN DELICH

BESSIE McHUGH spends all of her working time sending people to far away places—almost every corner in the world—and often longs to go herself.

"It would be nice, I guess," remarks this pleasant, very Irish woman, "but I'm not complaining if I can't get to those places myself. Maybe some day I'll be surprised."

Bessie McHugh is Miss Elizabeth McHugh, passenger agent for Furness Withy & Co., Ltd., steamship owners and agents. Her job is a fairly new one, in fact it was set up—for the first time since the war—only last December.

Up until that time, there wasn't much of a demand for it, because postwar travel in the first years was too hectic for pleasure-seekers.

"I Needed A Job"

But Bessie, as everyone around the water front knows gracious Miss Elizabeth, has been in the steamship business much longer than postwar. In fact, she started out there as a stenographer in 1916, right after finishing high school.

"I needed a job," the modest lady explains, "and this seemed like a good one. And it has proved to be just that. I enjoy steamship and passenger travel work so much.

"I came to work for the 'Guvner' in the first place."

The "Guvner" around Baltimore's water front is Arthur F. Sidebotham, the retired manager of Furness, Withy, who still can be seen walking along Water and Redwood streets visiting old cronies and checking in at 19 South street to make certain all is going well at Furness House.

Miss McHugh moved right up the line from the stenography job. Before she knew it she was helping captains enter and clear their ships at the Customs House.

What The Job Entails

The task involves making up the long, detailed papers and other reports necessary to satisfy Uncle Sam about all ships traveling between the United States and foreign points. These papers include crew lists, cargo manifests, outward clearance papers, and other special documents—depending on where the ship is going and what cargo it is carrying.

Too, there was consular work to be handled. Bessie guided the officers in all this.

If she came across too big a problem—one which had to be taken up with the Customs or Immigration office, she prepared all the background work on it and then let "one of the boys" in the office do the direct handling of it.

When Furness, Withy decided to re-establish its passenger office in Baltimore last year, the manager, Joel M. Cloud, chose Bessie McHugh for the job because she is



Bessie at work at her desk surrounded by travel brochures.

"a grand gal, a fine character, and is the best fitted."

"She knows this work inside out," Mr. Cloud praises.

The trips she handles touch almost every point on the globe.

Some Calls Are Difficult

Usually a person calling her up knows where he wants to go and the arrangements are not too difficult, she explains.

But from time to time, someone calls who just wants to take a trip.

Her first questions are, "How long a trip" and "how much money do you want to spend?"

If it is a short trip, she usually recommends Bermuda (which she has visited), a six-and-a-half-day round trip by ship with the fare ranging between \$125 to \$600. This includes the required two-and-a-half-day stay on the island.

A longer trip can be to any place—the West Indies, South America, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Italy, Sweden, or the Far East, to mention a few.

She works at a desk surrounded by travel brochures telling about the ships and the areas where the ships go. Bessie sometimes suggests a hotel at the destination, if the passenger requests such information.

Different Every Day

Passengers usually get their own passports and visas. She does inform them, if they ask, where to go for these and which shots for diseases they must take.

Too, they usually like to see a sketch of the ship and the location of their room.

"It's something different every day, and I learn more each year," the round-faced brunette relates.

"This year we have helped persons making the pilgrimage to Rome."

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