

Letters

GOUPI LIESNARD I thank you very much for having published my latest letter in the rag some people call Ethel the Frog. But I must inform you that 'Allan Calhamer' isn't one of my pseudonyms yet. Indeed, Diplomacy is a game I do not like very much since I've been defeated in Moeshoeshoe's 'D' game after four seasons.

DON TURNBULL Turning to the Grau problem, I think we have a real enigma here. Just to aid my thinking, let's put down the moves again:

ENGLAND: a lon-den c by f nth, s by f ska & f swe.

GERMANY: f hol-nth c by f den.

RUSSIA: f nwy-nth s by f nrg.

Now ~~unambiguous~~. What Colin says is absolutely true. The rule to which he refers (and which I confess I missed, though its import is clear from previous rulings) says 'if a convoyed army attacks a fleet which is supporting a fleet which is attacking one of the convoying fleets, that support is not cut.' Example quoted is:

FRANCE: a spa-nap c by f goi, s by f tys.

ITALY: f ion-tys s by f nap.

Which is clear enough.

The bit you remembered from the Rulebook states 'if a unit ordered to support in a given space is attacked from a space different from the one into which it is giving support, or is dislodged by an attack from any space, including the one into which it is giving support, then the support is cut.'

Which is also clear.

Elsewhere it states the 'revised' Miller rule - 'It may be said that a dislodged unit has no effect on the space its attacker came from.'

Which is also clear.

However, you can't put these into a pot and mix them - they are mutually exclusive in the Grau case. You can approach it from a number of ways, but as I see it you get to the same paradox.

1. Take the convoy rule above as a start. By the application of this, the support of f den is valid. BUT not only does that contradict the support rule above, but it also contradicts the Miller rule (if the support is valid, then a dislodged unit's order is having an effect on the space from which the attack came); also, one could say the order given to f den was illegal, since only because of that order f den is dislodged. And it is illegal to give an order which causes the displacement of a friendly unit. So...

2. Try disallowing the support, according to the support rule above. The very fact that the support is disallowed stops the convoy; but the convoying fleet should not be 'protected' according to the convoy rule. And if you disallowed the support in this case, then you should disallow it in the example given above, which is clearly not on.

3. Try saying that the move a lon-den is illegal, since only that order causes the displacement of the English fleet in nth; but you cannot then displace the f nth.

4. Try the realism argument. Enemy fleets are attacking the f nth from two sides; initially they balance. When the marines land, however, they quell the support from f den. Afterwards the Russian attack on nth succeeds, displacing f nth. But in Diplomacy you have a very coarse time scale, if you followed this line, a convoyed attack would never cut a support, wherever the support was aimed.

All of which brings us right back to the start. In other words, there is a paradox in the rules which is incapable of being resolved either by the strict application of the rules or of a realism argument. Great stuff! To think we have gone 15 years without seeing it!

I don't know whether you or Andy have come across Boolean logic in your course, but from my dim memory, it strikes me we have hit a logical paradox, on the lines of Epimenedes the Cretan (spelling?). If a statement is true (a dislodged unit has no effect on the space whence the attack came) then so is its contrapositive (if there would be some effect on the space whence the attack came, then the unit must not be dislodged).

It would all be cleared up, of course, if the convoy rule quoted by Colin was stated in the rules as being a clear exception to the support rules given before. It isn't - that's the trouble. It would be ridiculous to suppose that a unit can be dislodged yet have its support remain valid, as Colin suggests, under the rules governing support. Yet it would be equally ridiculous to say that a unit cannot be dislodged just because it has given support in the right direction. After all, f den is being attacked by three times its own strength, with no stand-off characteristics in the situation. ((cont.p.3))

I get the impression that I have missed something simple which will solve this. But if it is there, it eludes me. I am forced to accept the paradox. If I were being asked to rule on this, bearing in mind the spirit of the Rulebook (a most indefinable quality, if ever there was one) I would rule as I stated before - the attack on Denmark fails, and the North Sea fleet remains. I am acutely aware that considerable arguments could be massed against this decision, but, for what it's worth, that's the way I would rule.

On the back page you mentioned the start of Ethil: as I read it, it looked as though I let you down, by failing to send out a flier with Albion. I hope that's not so - I am usually quite happy to enclose anything with Albion, providing I am sent enough copies and the promoter is willing to cough up any additional postage which might result from the increase in weight. Perhaps I am reading the section wrong. ((Indeed you are, Don - the flier didn't appear because I didn't get it done, and for no other reason. I've still got a letter from you somewhere saying how many copies would be needed, etc., though I'm afraid it must be a bit out of date by now. And thank you, incidentally, for your analysis of the Diplomacy Problem of the Month.))

'I': 1 Cerine 3018 SAURON TO MINAS TIRITH... FAILS'

ERADOR (Waldie): =a sdo-gwy; a arn-wca, a eve-arn s by f lhu.

CONDOR (Mellish): a isn s (rohan) a igr, a cal & a lam s =2a nti;
=2a nti s (umbar) a bel-sgo

MORDOR (Bell): 2a msh-kha; 2a wtz-mor; a lor stands*; a nwa-gun,
a ang-ett, a hol-rhd; 2a nit-nti s by =3a sit; 2a udu-nit.

RHOVANION (Pajohn): a and-dg s by a gf; a ere-iro; a gmo-ett;
a rhd s (eriador) a arn-wea; a smi-bro; =a run-nur.

ROHAN (Yare): =2a cel-lor, a wen-wol; a edo-wen, a igr stands;
a ees s (gondor) a cal.

UMBAR (Durrheim): =a bel-sgo s by a hrd & a kha*, watched by f bel.

*Retreats: Mordor a lor-mor, Umbar a kha-nur.

Note how the garrison in Minas Tirith prevented Sauron's orc-hosts from taking control...

Rivendell: Bilbo and the Stranger sat at opposite sides of the great fire. "It was very kind of the Doctor to get hold of someone to help me with my book," said Bilbo. "I understand you've written a few pieces yourself, Mr. ...er ..er..." "Just call me Papa," said the Stranger, stroking his grizzled beard. "Now, Bilbo, how about this..." and, closing his eyes, he began:

"It snowed hard that winter. It was the winter they all went up to the Front. You could get up early in the morning, if you were not wounded, and forced to lie in your bed and look at the ceiling and wonder about the thing with the women, and you could see them going up to the Front, in the snow. That was the way it was that winter. Thorin watched them going up to the Front in the snow."

Bilbo shifted nervously as the Stranger paused momentarily for breath. "That's not quite the way I'd imagined describing it," he said uneasily.

Barad-Dur "Not playing," said Sauron, sucking a Palantir. "Send for the Imperial Builder and have his face removed. When I say build, I expect people to build. We're not finished yet, though, are we preciousss? Must try and stop that, very bad habit, yess..."

South Downs: "Okay, nan," said Gandalf, "This is where I split the scene. I'll meet you at Elrond's pad in Rivendell, okay?" "Bye, bye," simpered Frodo ((ugh! he makes me sick!)). "Now where can Pippin be? O dear!"

"Here I am, Frodo old bean! Anyone for tennis, what?" said Peregrin, from behind a nearby bush.

"What? Master Peregrin, has that been going again? That needs fertilizer, it bea great for leaks!" interjected Sam, sucking at a cornstalk.

"Now, now!" falsettoed Frodo. "Sam, there's no need to be checky. You go and kiss Pippin and say you're sorry, or I'll have to smack your wrists, and that would be aw---gaak!"

"Okay! Nobody move, and nobody gets hurt, except for this twit here!"

(Who is this violent stranger? Has something happened to Frodo? Is it (tee hee, readers!) permanent? Look out for this column in the next stupendously exciting issue!!!)

"...Here in the northward regions were the mines and forges, and the musterings of long-planned war, and here the Dark Power, moving its armies like pieces on the board, was gathering them together."

--- J.R.R. Tolkien, The Return of the King.

'H'. 2 Cerime 3018 MINAS MORGUL FALLS TO THE MEN OF HARAD AS SAURON
CAMPAIGNS IN THE NORTH!

ERIDADOR (Lettice): =a rhd-hol, a sdo-rhd, a arn-ang s by a wea;
f lhu-ibf.

GONDOR (Christianson): a cal*, a isn & a lam all stand.

MORDOR (Ward): 2a nit-cal s by =3a mt1, 2a sit-msh, 2a kha-msh,
a nin-rau; a rhn-car, a run-ere s by a gm, 2a dg-and; a hol-rhd*,
a ett ms a ang.

RHOVANION (Patterson). a mor s (eriador)=a rhd-hol, a mir-sm1,
=a ere-gmo* s by a and*.

ROHAN (Davis): =2a bro-dag, a eem-wol; a igd-dun; a ne-rau;
a eas s (gondor) a cal.

UMBAR (Harris). =a nur-mmo, a sgo-msh, a hdw-sgo s by f bel.

*Retreats: Gondor a cal eliminated. Mordor a hol-mm, Rhovanion =aere-iro,
a and-gf.

E: 6 bases: sh1, eve, lhu, arn, rhd, hol. Build a sh1.

G: 2 bases: lam, isn. No change.

M: 14 bases: bar, udu, msh, sit, nit, mt1, cal, kha, dg, and, ang, car,
ere, gm. Build a msh, a bar.

RH: 4 bases: mor, gf, sm1, run. No change.

RO: 6 bases: edo, wem, eas, igd, cel, wol. Build a edo.

U: 5 bases: hrd, hum, cit, sgo, mmo Build a hrd.

Northern Waste: "Hey, man," said Hojo Hominigrits, "I've got these Shire
prgs on-my-back; y'know, and I read in the last issue that you take the
International Times, so I thought, christ! that cat will let me crash for
a space. O.K.?" ZAP! went Smaug.

Umbar: The War Dept. today tested their Pugwash Mk. 1 floating torpedo, the
first ever to be made completely out of wood. It sank ten feet from the dock
and exploded on the sea bed, producing a full year's supply of fried fish.
"Back to the old sawing board," the Chief Carpenter was heard to remark.

Minas Tirith: Following riotous celebrations due to the conquest of Gondor,
a large amount of empty beer cans were to be disposed of. An old crone
called Ioreth directed the Imperial Superfluous Matter Disposer to a huge
cavern under the mountains, crammed full of cans, bottles, propaganda leaflets
and all the other filth to be expected of such a decadent society as once
lived here. The eagle-eyed investigator noticed that on each can was written,
'Place Ring in empty can', and Sauron insisted that the mountain should be
torn apart searching in every can ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~ring~~ to see if there was any beer
left. This explains why military expansion into Gondor has ceased... all
other rumours are totally untrue

So Long, Sauron! or, Mental Ward by Frodo Baggins:

All those who rhyme are not poets, nor all those who conquer are boss;
But when hobbits tell them to stow it, they wax unbelievably cross!
Because you've just marched into Gondor, you think you are really the thing;
If you were, you'd have yonder what I have right here: the One Ring!

Bree: Hannibal Barca escapes! Last seen carrying the Tony Blackburn Joke
Book! Police being treated for brain damage!

Edoras: "Look, Doctor," said Theodred, "things are getting serious. We need
Hannibal back." The Doctor stared into the Palantir and the air on the
receiver plate shimmered and took on the form of a young man, who stepped
down, brushing the dust off his hat and adjusting his black leather gloves.
"Howdy," he grinned. "You oaf!" bellowed Theodred, hurling his helmet at
the Doctor. "I meant Hannibal Barca, not Hannibal Heyes!"

Bag End. Come to Baggins' Toys and Jokes - make a hobbit of it!

'G': 1 Urime 3018

UMBAR FLEETS PUT TO SEA IN FORCE

ERIODOR (Morrison): a ang-ett, a arn-wea s by=a sdo; a bra-gwy;
a shi-bra, f frl-wes.

GONDOR (Davis): a anf-lam s by a dnr.

MORDOR (Sauron): =3a lam-eas; 2a cal-lam s by a mt1; a nit-cal;
2a nin-rau; a msh-sit; a bar-dag; a lor-cel s by 2a gf;
a mor-wiz; a hol-gwy, a iro-cre, 2a rhn-car; a rhd-gmo s by a and.

RHOVANION (Walkerdine): =a ere-mir s by a sm1; a car-ere*,
a cel-and* s by a gmo.

ROHAN (Corker): =2a wol-bro s by a rau, a me s a rau; a igd s a wiz;
a wiz stand.

UMBAR (Jeffery): =a kha-sgo, a/f sgo-bel; f cit-sou, a hrd-hdw.

*Retreats: Rhovanon a cel-dg, a ear-iro

Yes, Gondor is now ruled by Martin Davis, 16 Cross St, Oakfield, Ryde, I.o.W.

Barad-Dur: Reports are coming in of unrest among the troops. The forces of Mordor are travelling so fast that the orcs are complaining of lack of time for taking photos for the family albums.

Shirc: A Call for Unification, by Frodo Baggins:

His first's in the Shire, my home far away.

His second's in Shadow, forever to stay.

His third is in Nazguls, his winged Black Riders,

His fourth can be found in both my name and Strider's.

His fifth is the Ring that can give him such power,

His sixth is in Orthanc, Isengard's tower.

His whole isn't Dougal or Winnie the Pooh,

But I'm not afraid of him - how about you?

A united front is all that we need

Together to stay till all lands are freed!

!-!
1972Kco ('B'). November/December 1915 TURKEY GROWS STRONGER AGAIN

ENGLAND (Stuart): a swe-den; f rig-stp s by a fin; f pru-cou,
a nwy boards f nrg -- a/f nrg-hbs -- a hbs dis ire;
a kie boards f hel -- a/f hel-ang -- a ang dis bel,
f bal s a ber; a ber, f ntn & a lon stand.

RUSSIA (Feintuck): a vol-mos s by a ark.

TURKEY (Maule): a con-bul; a sin-con; f aeg-gre; f cys ms f ems.

AUSTRIA (D.Christianson): a ode, a ukr, a var, a gal, a dre, a mun,
a mac, a alb, a cro*, f adr* all stand.

FRANCE (A.Davidson): a par-bre; a lor-par, a gas-leo; a tyr-boh,
a/f lon-adr -- a adr dis cro s by a ven; a pie-tyr s by a swa;
f cms-1on; f tys-cms s by f mas, a rom-nap.

*Retreats: Austrian a cro & f adr both disbanded.

E: 13 bases: lon, ply, edi, lpl, ire, bel, hol, nwy, den, kie, stp, swe, ber.
Build f ply.

R: 2 bases: ark, mos. No change.

T: 7 bases: dam, egy, gre, smy, sin, con, bul. Build a dam: only one
build requested.

A: 10 bases: zar, pec, bud, vie, mun, ser, rum, ode, dre, var. No builds
requested, of course -- owed 2

F: 14 bases: bre, par, lyo, mar, and, cas, por, sic, mor, tun, rom, zur,
nap, ven. No change.

Versailles: Overheard in the butler's drawing room:

"You're mad! Do you really think an English spy could infiltrate his way into Paris?"

"Most certainly. Who slipped the paralysis drug into the Austrian Army's water-bottles? It wasn't us, yet we are the only ones who have the secret."

"Don't tell me the Dauphin is a turncoat?"

"It certainly seems that way. At this rate, we may not even win the game."

"That would be disastrous! It would break Napoleon's heart!"

E: 7 bases: lon, lpl, edi, nwy, hol, den, kie. Build a lon.
 G: 1 base: swc No change!!
 R: 6 bases: war, sev, mos, stp, rum, ber. Remove a lvn.
 T: 3 bases: con, ank, smy. No change.
 A: 7 bases: tri, vie, bud, bul, gre, ser, mun. No change.
 I: 4 bases: ven, rom, nap, tun. Build a ven.
 F: 6 bases: brc, pai, mar, spa, por, bol. No change.

Ankara (Govnt): The People's Government of Turkey, recently formed following the demise of our beloved Sultan, wish it to be known that they do not intend to take the current Russian attack lying down. All members of the cabinet have therefore had their beds fixed vertically to the walls of their bedrooms. This isn't expected to alter the high birth-rate among government officials. Our leaders are all ~~very~~ versatile, in any case.

Rome: Following the apprehension of the comic-stealer 'Benny', there has been a survey on which comics the Italian people and their subjects like the best. The most popular comics were Beano, Dandy, Lion and Burdock.

!-!

1972BK ('C'): Autumn 1906 ENGLAND DRIVEN BACK FROM BLACK SEA

Error! Last issue I underlined the Turkish move a bul-ser. It succeeded, of course, although Turkey's move a con-ser, reported in the same adjudication, failed. That one was illegal...

ENGLAND (Taylor): a nwy-stp, a ukr-rum s by a sev* & a war,
 f nth-ska; a kie-ber; a den-kie; f nrg, a hol & a yor stand.

GERMANY (Maule): a tyr-mun s by a ber, a sil & a boh.

RUSSIA (B. Davidson): a rum s (turkey) a arm-sev.

TURKEY (Jeffery). a arm-sev s by f bla, a tri s a bud, f adr s a tri;
 a bud & a ser s (russian) a rum, a con-bul.

AUSTRIA (Waldie): a gal vie.

FRANCE (Bell) a pie-tyr s by a ven, a rom s a ven; a mar-pie;
a bur-mun s by a ruh; a par-bur, f nap & f tys stand.

Retreat English a sev disbanded - no retreat orders submitted.

E: 12 bases. lon, lpl, edi, bel, hol, kie, den, nwy, swe, stp, mos, war.
 Build a lpl, a lon, a edi.
 G: 2 bases ber, mun. Remove a boh, a sil.
 R: 1 base: rum. No change.
 T: 9 bases: con, ank, smy, bul, gre, ser, tri, bud, sev. Build f con, a ank.
 A: 1 base: vie. No change.
 F: 9 bases: bre, par, mar, spa, por, tun, rom, nap, ven. No change.

In terms of the balance between land and sea forces, this game is one of the most unusual I've ever come across. On the board at the moment are 7 fleets and 27 armies .. and to have an England with 10 armies and only 2 fleets must surely be an event of the utmost rarity. Ho boy!

Police Notice: The joke stolen recently from the Tony Blackburn collection is still at large, and the general public are again reminded to report to their doctor should they suspect they may have contacted the joke.

Now, Home Office experts have discovered that the joke is capable of breeding, so utmost caution is required. Anyone who sees the joke or any of its offspring should contact Noel Edmonds, who is badly in need of a joke or two.

For sale: One genuine mink coat. Phone 049-46-4116. If Wendy answers, don't for gou's sake call her Hartley's horrible sister..

Lost: Small boy, aged 20, last seen leaving Manchester Piccadilly a month or so ago. Has no intrinsic worth, but is an essential in ventriloquial act. Substantial reward (1/2p) to finder. Contact Mrs C.M. Davidson, Flat D5, Harewood Court, Marsland Rd, Sale, Cheshire.

Found: Small boy in Cambridge. About 20, believed starving to death. Claims to be ruler of Nordor. We'll give you £50 to take him off our hands. Contact Mid-Anglia Constabulary, Park Street, Cambridge.

PS: PLEASE HURRY!

1972K ('A'): Autumn 1908

FRENCH FORCES PARALYSED!

GERMANY (A. Davidson): f stp(n)-bar s by f nrg, a fin-swe, f gob-bal; a gal-boh, a sil-mun; a ber-kie; a tyr-vie*; a yor-lon, f eng-bel s by a hol, a bur-par.

RUSSIA (Jeffery): a ukr-rum; f lvn-stp(s); f bar stand*, a mos-ukr, a pru ms a war

AUSTRIA (Robertson): f tri-adr, a rom-ven; a ven-tyr s by a vie; a bud s a vie; f nap-tys s by f ion

FRANCE (Christianson): f bre, f wms, f tun, f tys*, a naf, a bel* & a mar all stand.

*Retreats: French f tys, a bel, & Russian f bar all distanded. German a tyr-tri''

G: 13 bases: ber, mun, kie, den, hol, lon, lpl, edl, nwy, swe, tri, bel, par. Build a ber.

R: 8 bases: stp, mos, war, sev, con, ank, smy, rum. Build f sev, a mos. No room for third build.

A: 8 bases: vie, bud, ser, bul, gre, nap, rom, ven. Owed 1, but no room to build.

F: 5 bases: bre, mar, spa, por, tun. No change.

Wot Kaos! Wot konfusion! as Hemming might say. Yes, France did submit some orders this move, but mighty peculiar ones they are...

A letter just received from Peter Robertson says he is traction with a crushed vertebra (bad) and cannot get to his board (disastrous!). I'll ask Jeff Oliver (again) to submit standby orders for Austria until Peter is again able to continue, and I'm sure all Ethil's readers will join me in wishing the real Austria a speedy recovery.

Vienna. "The trouble with my troops is that they've no staying power. Just a minor setback, and they flee in terror, so that it's impossible to bring them back together again. It's as bad as having the entire army eliminated. It's putting a terrible strain on the conscription posts... Austria is running out of men-of a military-age..."

Vienna (Govnt): We have restrained ourselves to the point of asphyxiation-suicide despite Germany's repeated vile and unprovoked attacks upon our hegemony and then our Empire. We have great pleasure now in declaring total war on Germany, which will not cease until the destruction of that perfidious neighbour, or our own collapse. We appeal to France to withdraw its units to enable us to put our full might against Germany.

1972CL ('F'): Spring 1904

EYETIES MISS GREECE. FRENCH IN IRISH SEA AS GERMANY ADVANCES INTO RUSSIA

ENGLAND (Durrhelm). f nwy-nrg, f eng-mao, a pic stands s by f bel.

GERMANY (Morrison): a war-lvn; a ber-pru, a hol-kie, f swe-fin; f ska-swe s by a den; a mun stands

RUSSIA (Williams) a smy-ank; a rum-sev, f bal-pru, a stp-mos, f gob-stp(s).

TURKEY (B. Davidson): a gre-scr; a arm stands, f aeg s a bul.

AUSTRIA (Davies): f alb & a ser s (italy) f ion-gre; a vie stands.

ITALY (Oliver): f tri stands s by a ven & a tyr; a nap-gre c by f ion.

FRANCE (Alexander): a par-pic s by a bre, a gas-bur, f mao-iri; f spa(s)-mao.

London: Dxxx, Fxxx, and various other swear words. The king will definitely not miss his orders a second time. Already the barbaric Frogs are regaining land which our glorious Ruler pinched fair and square. He says that if this happens again, he's not playing, so there!!

Athens: "Eh, Metaxas, did you see what went on there?"

"Don't bother me now, Capistrano. I'm busy."

"But didn't you see it? A vast band of Italian marines was repulsed by our army, which was attacking Serbia in the North at the same time!"

"So? You've been in the Time Service long enough now to have got used to the odd paradox or two. Come on and join me! I tell you, you haven't lived-tall yet! You've had one of those near-death experiences!"

Odds and Ends

One of the more interesting items of mail which I didn't receive last week was a circular advertising the start of a 'National Games Club'. This document was apparently received by several Diplomacy people centred around London... I guess Cambridge doesn't count, still, I expect I may turn up at the Bedford Corner Hotel, which is where it's all at, baby, one of these days. The first meeting took place last Sunday, and received a reasonably serious write-up in the Guardian the following day. This report reveals that the brains behind this enterprise is Graeme Levin. Now where have I heard that name before? "Diplomacy has been around in the States for about 10 years, and about five years over here," says John Windsor, the reporter. "Its new-found popularity is partly due to enthusiasts like Levin, whose postal Diplomacy group, founded six months ago, already has 200 members." Graeme Levin is revealed as the brains behind the game Speculate, reputed as one of the better of Waddington's family of games (I must admit I haven't played the game myself), -- it seems his degrees in various business studies and other unimaginable courses helped in the design. "Levin believes that by playing games, learning to operate within their framework of rules, we can become more skilful in our use of the environment as a whole. 'Games players have a better perspective.'" ends the report. It's a bit gosh-wow, even fairly shallow, but even so it's good to see our hobby recognised like this in the Press. Even if they still haven't given out glowing spells about Ethel. /// I've heard that the NGC was reported in the Daily Mirror as well, if anyone has any clippings of interest I'd appreciate it if they sent them to me. /// While on the subject of clippings, how about this little gem from Punch: "Last week's issue of the 'Courier' - which carried a special feature on birching - was a complete sell-out." Looks like you've had your lot of your copy of the adjudications got lost in the post... Actually, it's the Isle of Man Courier they're talking about, so all you ghouls who were just addressing envelopes to Gilwerton Court had better tear them up... ///

Some people have queried me as to how their units managed to retreat in the THIRD AGE games. Well, it's all perfectly simple -- in THIRD AGE we are using the old version of the Rulebook, in which disbanding a dislodged unit is allowed only if there is no retreat space available. So that in a THIRD AGE game, if a dislodged unit isn't supplied with retreat orders, I retreat the unit myself to an adjacent space. I decide the space, in theory, by using a strange entity known as Just's Right-Head Rule, however, in practice it usually turns out to be a combination of guesswork and my own individual whim as to where the unit retreats. So now you know. In the regular games, I am still disbanding dislodged units if their retreat orders are insufficient or nonexistent. The value of setting out retreats carefully is shown in 'A' game this issue, where Germany pre-ordered his a tyr to retreat to Trieste; and, lo and behold, it was able to retreat there, causing (no doubt) considerable embarrassment to Austria. Since retreats come after the moves in ordinary face-to-face play, it is permitted to make one's retreats (and builds, for that matter) conditional on the outcome of the previous moves, e.g. "retreat Tuscany to Pome, unless France occupies Piedmont, in which case retreat it to Tyrolia, Venice, in that order of preference". You get the idea, I think. Just to stop endless speculation, no, that example does not refer to any postal Diplomacy game currently running. ///

Brrrr! It's cold! Yes, as we all know we are currently under a three-month prices and wages freeze. It is scheduled to end next February, I believe. How does this affect us? Well, most of you probably know I was planning to raise the price of this thing slightly on January 1 next. (The rates after the rise will be 7/40p, 18/£1). Which is all very well, but last week Andy Davidson invaded my room, and with extreme pleasure in his voice told me it was illegal for me to raise my prices while the freeze is on! Mind, I'm not at all sure that Andy's right... but I'm going to check up. If he has got the right end of the stick ~~for damn~~ you can be damn sure the price will be upped the instant the freeze ends!

Brief candles... Jeff Oliver is taking all references to Oliphants in THIRD AGE propaganda personally... Andy didn't go through with his diet -- I tempted him to make pancakes for me on Sunday 29th, which he did, but the greedy sod ate half of them himself (they were quite good ones, too - he'd remembered to put an egg in for once)... why did the latest XI take two weeks to come out?... Jeremy Elsnor's address, which I omitted by accident in the last Ethel, is 'The Gorse', Tabley Rd, Knutsford, WA16 0HB. Jeremy is looking for various zines -- ~~see Ethel 16 for details~~ --

ETHIL THE FROG is the work of John Piggott, Jesus College, Cambridge, CB5 8BL, U.K., and appears every two or three weeks by courtesy of Ian Maule's duplicator. Subscription rates: Inland, 10/50p. Europe, 10/70p. Elsewhere, 4/\$1 airmail, 8/\$1 third class. Your mailing label bears the number of your last paid issue. This is Tapeworm Production No. 23.

Next deadline: Friday December 1, 1972.

FIRST POST

Problems, problems...

A gratifyingly large number of people commented on the change in format which I introduced last issue. Just to show you that your comments haven't gone unnoticed, we're back to one column on the front page already.

The other thing which people complained about in vast numbers was the introduction of lower-case lettering only in the game reports. I can see why you might not like this very much, but I'm afraid that it's here to stay for a very simple reason. Time. It doesn't take as long typing a game report in completely lower-case characters as it does using 'normal' symbols; and time in this instance is of the utmost importance. At the moment, each issue of Ethil is produced in a hell of a rush, because most of it cannot be typed until after the deadline, either because material is pertaining to games or because material does not arrive till the deadline. Today, for instance, I have typed eight out of ten stencils for this Ethil and it has taken me from about 11.30 a.m. until 8 p.m. with a few short breaks for eating. And that's a hell of a long time. It takes this long for two main reasons: first, game results have to be adjudicated fairly carefully, and typed out to a high degree of accuracy: game reports don't consist of familiar letter-groups so that the typing of the moves themselves takes longer than ordinary copy-typing. Secondly, I edit press releases as I go along, correcting errors of grammar and spelling, trying to improve the humour, etc., as I go along. This means that press releases take longer to type than they might.

What could I do to help allay this? Well, some magazines segregate press releases and adjudications, typing out the releases some time before the deadline. I tried this some issues back and it was not well received, and I was none too happy about the idea myself anyway: it means most of the press has to be carried over for the next season. (Graustark's editor rarely catches up with all the press he gets submitted.) If I tried not editing the press, it would make the thing somewhat unreadable (what's that? it is now?), I fear. In addition, this editing gives me a moral excuse (as if I ever needed one) to reject huge chunks of people's contributions, and this is the only thing that stands between you people and a twenty-page Ethil each month. And even I'm not that far gone... yet.

Ah well. See you next ish.

ETHIL THE FROG 17
 c/o John Piggott,
 Jesus College
 Cambridge
 CB5 8BL
 U.K.