



"Bilgewater on knibbling pins," roared Marmaduke Surfaceblow when I threw the letters on his desk.

The Scored Ram

► OUR CHIEF EDITOR, Phil Swain, had an interesting question thrown at him while acting as chairman of a sectional conference at the Maintenance Show in Cleveland this year.

"What's a KNIBBLING PIN?" was the question. If you readers remember, Marmaduke Surfaceblow sounded off about the 200-lb knibbling pin that Chief Engineer Cragan took ashore in Shanghai, January Power.

Ever since, letters have been flooding us. Everyone wants to know what part of the engine that pin is in, or what it does. So yesterday we decided to find out.

I headed over near the waterfront to Marmy's dingy office above O'Houlihan's Machine Shop & Engine Works. Climbing the creaky stairs to the second floor, I stopped in front of the door with the bright red sign reading *Marmaduke Surfaceblow, Esq., Consulting Engineer*. The door was ajar. Tobacco smoke coming from inside told me not only that Marmy was in, but also that he had a full head of steam up on his boiler.

Inside, the tough old sea horse was

firmly anchored with his stern in the battered swivel chair and his long legs prepped up on his roll-top desk. He reminded me of the bowprit poking ahead of an old square rigger. A large blueprint lay on his slightly bulging midship section. Marmy, who had been through so many sea and land campaigns, was studying the print intently through a cloud of smoke, as if charting a course for some tropical island.

"Here's a stack of mail about that story in the January issue," I said cheerfully, dumping it on his desk. "Your public wants to know what a KNIBBLING PIN is."

"BILGWATER ON KNIBBLING PINS," roared Marmy, shoving the blueprint to one side and glaring at his mail. "I'll tell you about a tough hydraulic packing problem that was solved by common, everyday horse sense." I grabbed a chair. Marmy blasted away.

"Back in 1928, I was a millwright for a large rubber company in Akron, Ohio," roared Marmy, like a hungry lion. "We had a string of 1500-psi hydraulic presses. They had rams of 18, 24 and 36 in. diameter, and were used

for pressing automobile tires. They were good Republican days and the presses worked steadily to help put cars in every garage.

"My job was installing new equipment in a new wing of the old plant. One day I heard the boss was in trouble. Seems that gunk had gotten into the liquid of a 36-in. ram and burned them so the large turns of leather packing were torn up with every stroke of the ram.

"That press was a giant and badly needed at that time. The boss couldn't shut it down without laying off a lot of help affected by its work. Besides, shutting down meant losing a lot of business.

"They tried repacking the ram, but after a few strokes the liquid would squirt all over the plant, almost as if there was no packing in the stuffing box. So the plant engineer called in his maintenance foreman and asked him for advice. The foreman suggested tearing down the press, moving the ram to the machine shop and grinding it down smooth. But tearing down a press with a 36-in. ram is no small job. That would take days and cost thousands of dollars for repairs, besides lost production.

"Suggestions were given by almost everyone in that department. Various mill-supply houses handling packing

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It has SAVINGS written on it



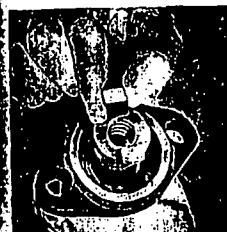
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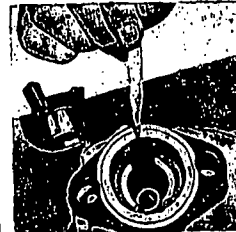
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