

# A regular

# Bank Holiday

Chamber wants

## Christmas Day on a Monday

CHRISTMAS comes but once a year—but when it does Christmas Day should always be on a Monday.

This is the plea being made by members of Ipswich Chamber of Commerce.

Copies of a resolution asking the Association of British Chambers of Commerce to start talks with Mr. Wilson and his colleagues on the matter are to be sent by the Ipswich Chamber to three local MPs—Ipswich MP Mr. Ernle Money, Sndbury and Woodbridge MP Mr. Keith Stainton and Bury St. Edmunds MP Mr. Eldon Griffiths.

The resolution, from the Retail Section of Ipswich Chamber of Commerce, and backed by the Chamber's Executive Committee, urges that the Easter and Christmas holidays should be fixed in the same way as Whit Monday, now Spring Bank Holiday, and August Bank Holiday.

Chairman of the Retail Section, Mr. Hugh R. Davis, of Davis China Shop, Crown Street, explained that with shops employing large numbers of part-time female staff there was difficulty with husbands being on Christmas holiday from industry while their wives were working in the shops.

### Validity doubt

He doubted whether there was any "historical validity" in December 25 being the chosen date.

As far as Easter was concerned, a fixed date would make it easier for ordering Easter-type gifts, particularly Easter eggs.

Director of Debenham's, Ipswich's largest department store, Mr. T. M. Poweraker, said he could see the advantages and disadvantages of the Chamber's resolution. On balance he thought the resolution was right but acknowledged there could be objections from a religious angle.

Former minister of Bethesda Baptist Church, the Rev. George Bird, now retired, agreed with fixing a regular date for Easter, but felt that because of the "emotional and happy experience" which had always been associated with Christmas Day falling on December 25 that this date should remain unchanged each year.

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## FIXING THOSE FEASTS

East Coast yachtsmen have always had a saying about getting their boats in the water by Easter — "but Easter's a moveable feast", they add with a grin.

If Ipswich Chamber of Commerce gets its way, though, this excuse will no longer be available to the tardy boatman who spends overmuch time in the Butt and Oyster or the King's Arms and too little time fitting out for the coming season. Easter, they say, should be fixed in the same way that Spring Bank Holiday and August Bank Holiday are already fixed.

Few people will worry much over that. Easter and Whitsun, so far as they are Church festivals, can continue to wander through the calendar and the public holiday will remain steady.

Christmas is quite another matter, however. The traders of Ipswich are likely to find some stiff opposition to the proposal that Christmas should always fall on a Monday.

There is, of course, no evidence whatever that Jesus was born on December 25, and there is every likelihood that his birthday was simply grafted on to an existing midwinter festival of pagan origin.

But Christmas Day has always been

December 25, since times whereof men's memories turn not to the contrary, and there are many non-churchgoers as well as churchgoers who will be unhappy to change that holiday.

We suspect that this proposal will meet with about as much success as the suggestion that Bury St. Edmunds' factories should introduce a kind of Wakes Week by all closing for the summer holidays at the same time.

This, of course, would be a retrograde step since the trend in recent years has been towards staggering holidays. And for the comfort and convenience of us all, both holidaymakers and holiday caterers, this appears to be an excellent trend.

The cheerful routines of Christmas have been eroded in the past quarter of a century, though. The shops no longer remain open until late on Christmas Eve, the milkman no longer makes his round in the early hours of Christmas morning so that he can have breakfast at home with his family on that day of all days, and Santa Claus now jostles Guy Fawkes in the toy department.

Christmas on a Monday — who knows?

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