

5-B DIVISION

Deep down in the machinery spaces the firemen and water-tenders of 5-B Division stand watch on the four, 600 p. s. i., 840° boilers. Two watches were stood, one in each machinery space. The watches in each fireroom consisted of either two or three firemen and a water-tender in charge. Theirs was the job of supplying steam at the proper pressure and temperature in accordance with the varying demands of the turbines, heating systems, and miscellaneous auxiliary equipment. Under steady steaming conditions the fireroom watch maintained constant vigilance over the various gages, indicating the supply of fuel oil, air, and water, and the temperature of this supply.

The water-tenders work was greatly reduced by the installation of the Hagan Combustion Control board which automatically regulated the amount of fuel oil, air and water going into



Changing burners in the fire room



Oil King facing ship

the boilers. However, due to the extremely high temperatures and pressures employed in boilers and the rapid fluctuation of steam demands, mechanical control could not be entirely relied upon and, the water-tender on watch had to keep constantly alert to avoid damage to the equipment or injury to the fire-room personnel.

The monotony of a fireroom watch under steady steaming conditions is broken by the changing of burners, shifting of fuel oil strainers, injection of soot reducing chemicals, the addition of boiler water compound, and the blowing of tubes. When the ship is maneuvering, the normal routine of watchful waiting becomes one of quick thinking, tenseness, and rapid action.