

Correspondence

SEA-CLUTTER AND COLLISION

I HAVE noticed, from time to time, with surprise that in some collision cases which are brought to Court, evidence is given of severe sea-clutter interfering with observation of the echoes of ships of considerable tonnage. In reports on the collision between the *Constitution* and the *Jalanta* it was stated that each ship lost the other's echo in sea-clutter at 2 miles. What perhaps is more surprising is that such conditions appear to be accepted by all concerned as normal or inevitable.

This prompted me to make enquiries from the U.K. radar manufacturers and their replies show their conviction that with proper use of the gain and swept gain controls, even in severe clutter conditions, an echo from a ship of 1000 g.r.t. or over, detected beyond the area of severe sea-clutter, should be brought in to the minimum range of the equipment, say 50 yards, without difficulty.

Obviously, radar cannot make its proper contribution to safety unless these adjustments are understood and carried out, and such a misapprehension on the subject should not pass unchallenged.

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Yours faithfully,
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Director