

61/65WHO'S FOR FRANCE

Fifty boys from all over the country underwent tests at Poole, to show they were competent to go on a 14-day canoeing holiday in France, sponsored by the Royal Marines. The youngsters were of ages between 16 and 19 and were chosen from 300 applicants. They had to prove that they know the drill if their canoe capsizes.

Lifebelts are compulsory, so there's no harm done, apart from surfacing a bit wetter than they went down. And as that goes for their gear, stowed fore and aft, nobody's going to capsize just for the fun of it.

Rougher water was chosen for the next test. Every boy had to demonstrate that he could swim to safety if he lost his canoe altogether.

Obviously the Marines didn't want canoe-ists who weren't trained to meet an emergency. The plan was to take the boys with their boats across the Channel on a Landing Craft, as far as Rouen, then by Road to Vernon. From there they'll paddle down the Seine to Le Harve, nearly 120 miles. All that, for £3-ten each. For the adventurous youngster, a wonderful holiday.