



LLOYD'S REGISTER OF SHIPPING,

810 HENNER BUILDING,

LLOYD'S REGISTER,
LONDON.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.,

RECD 2 JUN 1919

ANSD

May 15th. 1919.

J. M. BUCHANAN,
SHIP AND ENGINEER SURVEYOR.

The Secretary,

London;

Sir,

Aux:Scr:"Elizabeth Ruth"

I am in receipt of a letter from the New York Secretary dated May 10th. enclosing copy of a Report on the above vessel by Mr Preston together with a copy of the Secretary's covering letter.

I have carefully read Mr Preston's Report, and I note his findings and conclusions, although how he ascertained by his inspection of a loaded vessel, that there was no edge bolting in the ceiling, it is impossible for me, or any one else to know; He states in his Report that "Considerable shrinkage in woodwork generally, and workmanship of superior quality." Yet in New York's covering letter is said to have stated that the vessel has been built in a slip-shod manner; These statements by no means agree; As a matter of fact, when I examined this vessel in dry dock at Mobile, she had a 'hog' of at least 6", and was tight. All wood vessels that I have seen in dry dock are 'hogged'; The "Bereta" by the National S.B.Co; Orange, Texas, was hogged 10", and the sister vessels by the same Company are all hogged more or less; With regard to the statement of the Captain and Engineer of the "E--Ruth" that I had paid only six visits to the vessel during construction, I may say that these men only came to the vessel when she was half built; They may mean, of course that only six visits were paid by me while they were there, or they may mean during construction of the hull proper; but a total of 14 visits was actually made by me, and I have verified this by consulting my Journal, the following are extracts, viz:-
Aug: 28th. 1917.---conferred with Mr Daughdrill regarding new wood schooner, and examined lumber for keel and framing, going "over details of plans." Sep:13th. 1917. -----most of keel laid, frames being made----; Nov: 9th. 1917. -----going over fastenings with Manager; Jan: 15th. 1918. ---work delayed for lack of material----examined keelson scarphs, dimensions, and fastenings; Feb: 21st: 1918. ---examined planking and bottom ceiling, and keelsons, rudder and fastenings. Mar: 26th.1918. examined ceiling, clamps, stringers, hold and deck beams, hatch coamings, side planking and fastenings, rudder and masts, Eng: seating, one side stringer, starb: aft cracked-condemned-soft wood knees-condemned---- April 19th.1918. Examined two tail shafts in lathe, and one brass liner bored out, examined Eng: foundations, deck houses, decks, rudder and pintles etc; May 13th. 1918. Examined Eng: and thrust beds, fitting of sea valves, struts, rudder, tail shafts (these are 20" too short)

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#2. June 12th. 1918. Examined two new replace tail shafts, fitting of all sea connections (valves) and work on deck houses, windlass, etc;--- June 26th. 1918. Examined installing of engines in place, salting of vessel, details of finishing about decks etc: July 18th. 1918. Mobile, Pinte dry deck, Examined bottom and rudder after grounding on passage from Biloxi to Mobile, no damage; Examined fitting of engines and auxiliaries in position, salting of vessel, masts in place, rigging setting up, etc: Aug: 19th. 1918. Examined starb: eng: found the coupling of thrust and tail shaft open 1/16" at top, engine to be aligned, Port engine tried 86 revs; propeller pitch 7 feet (too great) examined completion of rigging and electric lighting. Aug: 27th. 1918. Examined aligning of starb: engine, examined riveting of two new air receivers, holes to be reamed, pointed out defects to Hedge boiler Foreman, met Mr Woolner (Owner's Representative) and had conference with him and Dwyer and Captain and Engineer regarding propellers; Vessel to dry dock at Colon to change propellers. Sep: 2nd. 1918. Tested two steel air receivers by hydraulic pressure to 350 lbs: per sq: inch, all tight and sound- examined engines running for two hours alongside wharf, revs: per min: 93; (propeller pitch too great) Mr Woolner, Owners Rep: present, also Dwyer, Engines worked satisfactorily;"

I can simply state to you that I made the above 14 visits to the vessel at Biloxi and Mobile, it may be that the Captain and Engineer are trying to shield themselves by making things look as black for me as possible- I scorn and despise them both- Mr Preston should not have repeated this silly gossip.

I still maintain that the prime cause of the vessel leaking was the loose caustic soda dissolving the oakum in the seams, of course the insufficient edge belting is a serious fault, and I can only advance as excuse for my not having caught up with this deliberate piece of cheating on the part of the Builders, that I could not give the vessel any more of my time than I did.

It is notorious that many of the wood ships built in the States during the War have leaked and given trouble, and no wonder, when it is remembered that they are built of green lumber, and by new Organizations, and by workmen, of whom some 80% never saw a ship, let alone built one; I have always dreaded having to supervise the building of wood ships in the South for this Society, on this very account. Mr James French will tell you that I advised him to have nothing to do with the Slidell ships, "FLUSH" FLIRT" etc: built by a new Concern with a minimum of shipbuilding knowledge of the art. Mr Wilson had the misfortune to supervise their construction, and when they turned out a miserable failure, he got into a multitude of trouble, as did everyone connected with them. It is true the "O A HERMANSON" turned out a success, but she was built by a real shipbuilder, and while under my inspection, although I don't claim any medals on that account. The Society takes precautions to see that Steel Makers are on the approved List before it will accept their product, but does not take similar precautions with a Shipyard, (a brand new one at that, and in a district where the biggest wood ship built was a fishing boat)

Mr Hutchinson has written on the margin of his letter to you (on the copy sent to me) "Mr Buchanan has been requested to defer making arrangements for leave of absence in the meantime."

#3.

My arrangements have been partly made for leave of absence, and if agreeable to you, I would prefer to lay my case before you personally; You know that these last four years have been very trying ones to us all, and I have had to put up with lots of worry both business and personal; I have not had a single day off from business for some seven years, except the usual odd general holidays; I have written the old Mother that I will come home to see her; Will you please cable me your decision, as to whether to stay here or make arrangements to come over.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully

M. R. Lavan.



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Foundation

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