

CAPTAIN BISSETT BLAMED FOR THE NEAR FOUNDERING OF THE IMPORTER

Wreck Commissioner McPherson and Two
Assessors Hold That Master and Officers
Are Deserving of a Severe
Reprimand

CHIEF ENGINEER F. C. BROWN HELD
EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR DISASTER

Court Finds That Poor Seamanship Was Ex-
hibited and That a "Colossal Blunder"
Was Made in Pumping Out No. 2
Ballast Tank



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VICTORIA, Jan. 24.—Wreck Commissioner John D. McPherson today handed down his report, concurred in by the two assessors, A. P. Williamson and J. T. Edmund, relating to the Canadian Importer disaster.

The investigators declare that the master and officers of the Canadian Importer are deserving of a severe reprimand, not only because of their evident poor seamanship in connection with the near foundering of the steamship, but also because of the way in which they gave evidence. The evidence, the finding states, was of such an unsatisfactory and evasive nature as to be utterly unreliable.

"It was perfectly obvious," says the report, "that the evidence was given reluctantly with an unconcerned indifference that almost amounted to defiance, but clearly with the studied object of suppressing and concealing the real cause which led to the ultimate disaster."

COLOSSAL BLUNDER

The report recites that when the Canadian Importer left Vancouver via Nanaimo for her voyage to New Zealand she was absolutely staunch and sea-worthy in every respect, well loaded and in good trim, and that no water found its way into the vessel from any source whatever until "the colossal blunder was made of pumping out No. 2 ballast tank, of 430-ton capacity in a lumber-loaded vessel already tender and with a comparatively high deck load."

The report goes on:

"The court arrives at its conclusion because there can be no possible question that if the vessel, as asserted, was making water to such an extent that her pumps were unable to keep it under control, it was the imperative duty of her master to at once shape a course for the nearest port and immediately send out wireless messages to that effect."

EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE

The court severely reprimands the master, Mr. Carl R. Bissett, and the chief engineer, Frederick C. Brown, whom, in the opinion of the court, are both equally responsible for the most witless act of pumping out No. 2 ballast tank in a lumber-loaded vessel with already a decided list.

By neglecting the most elementary precautions, the vessel was deprived of all her water ballast for more than half her length, which fact leaves little room for doubt or speculation as to what really happened.

The court further has no hesitation in saying that had there been sufficient evidence to justify it so doing, the certificates of both master and chief engineer would have been severely dealt with and strongly recommends that at any time if further trustworthy evidence be procured that the whole case should be reheard.



CAPT. BISSETT (in uniform)



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