

Lloyd's Register of British & Foreign Shipping,

14, Cross-shore Street,

Greenock, 5th November 1912

Reference

Dear Mr. Milton, J. J. Fordonman.

Mr. Hermy who has been off ill for a few days has just communicated to me the contents of a letter received from Dr. Hearle regarding my letter of the 2nd ult addressed to the Secretary; and pointing out that my action on this occasion is construed as not quite fair or straightforward to Mr. Heck. I can only say that I regret the construction put upon my action as nothing of the kind was in the remotest degree intended.

On the occasion referred to I wrote the Secretary the moment I received intimation from Messrs The Clyde Shipbuilding Co. that the 'Fordonman' was to be laid up, and as I gathered from the conversation over the phone that the work then being done was all that was considered necessary to enable the vessel to proceed in the Spring to Montreal, it occurred to me that in view of the recommendations made by Mr. Heck and my self regarding the Winter voyage, the Committee might require more than the builders were

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were then doing as necessary for a Spring voyage. It was to ascertain the Committee's views with regard to the requirements of such a voyage that my letter of the 20th ult. was written.

This letter was written in the morning and posted ere I was aware that Mr Heck was coming to Greenock. He arrived here at 6 pm; between that and 10 pm our final report on this vessel was drawn up. The recommendations there made were for a voyage across the Atlantic commencing almost immediately. My letter referred to a summer voyage and the requirements therefor, and in it I simply expressed my opinion regarding the requirements of the vessel under the new circumstances which had arisen.

Surely this need not be a cause of offence. Nevertheless I am sorry I did not think of showing Mr Heck the letter which I had written, as it would probably have prevented the misconception which has arisen.

I trust this explanation will make it clear to you, Mr Thearle and Mr Heck, that when I acted on the spur of the moment to obtain information suitable to the new circumstances which had arisen I did so in perfect good faith and with absolutely no intention of slighting a colleague for whom I entertain the highest respect.

I am yours faithfully, Wm. K. Austin.