

COPY.

PETROGRAD, October 20th 1920.

Messrs F.L. Dawson Ltd,  
NEWCASTLE.

Gentlemen,

I regret having to inform you of the loss of "CRETE-DYKE". After leaving the Tyne the weather got worse during the passage and on nearing the entrance to the Elbe increased in fury and a mountainous confused sea overtook us.

The tug made every effort to get us to safety under the lee of Heligoland, this being the only thing left to do, as it was impossible to bring the vessels head to sea, and even could this have been done I doubt whether under the circumstances either vessel would have lived through it.

At 10.15 p.m. we were overtaken by a tremendous sea, which completely buried both tug and lighter.

This sea was followed by two others which were of such weight that they stove in the lighter's fore hatch, which commenced to fill rapidly and the lighter commenced to settle by the head. The stokehold was full of water and, had the tug kept on towing, it would no doubt have been only a matter of minutes before she would have foundered with all hands.

Seeing this, and knowing the "CRETEDYKE" to be doomed, distress signals were exhibited till the tug slipped the hawser and at great risk to himself made repeated attempts to get us off the lighter. The tug kept steaming to windward and pouring oil on the sea and then dropping to leeward again and endeavoured to reach us.

During a violent squall he was driven off, and we then lost sight of him but later saw him making distress signals to attract the lifeboat.

The wire which the tug had slipped then proved our saviour for in some way or other, it became fast to the bottom and stopped us from drifting on sandbanks, although at times it



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seemed as though it would take the windlass out of her.

At 6 a.m. a German Cruiser bore down on us and fired a rocket with a small line attached over us which we hauled in until we got a 4" Manilla and made it fast on the bits aft, she then steamed slowly ahead but, as soon as a strain was put on it, it carried away.

Next the salvage tug "JASON" came to our assistance, and, after repeated attempts, safely got the crew of lighter on board his craft.

He then steamed round and grappled for our hawser which he managed to pick up, and towed us for a short while but our hawser parted. This operation was repeated with no success. After the wire parted the second time the lighter foundered off No. 1 Elbe. We were then conveyed to Cuxhaven and placed in the Hotel by Mr. Peter Hein, the agent.

During the transferring of crew to salvage steamer "JASON", the Donkeyman, J.G. Maale, broke his leg and J. Muirhead, seaman, dislocated his ankle but has made such excellent recovery that he has come on with me.

The Donkeyman was placed in Hospital and paid off.

The crew of the lighter stated they were willing to proceed to Petrograd but later, after you had been informed of this, said they would only go on the condition that they were supplied with some clothing. I wired you of this but received no reply, so sooner than delay the tug and knowing the importance of tug leaving as quickly as possible granted this request after consulting Mr. Hein..

All our stores was lost as was our clothing and we were landed absolutely destitute but for the dry clothing which was kindly supplied us by Captain Preece and crew of "CRETEBOOM" I took further provisions for voyage and had Mr. Hein settle the account as I had not sufficient money to do so.

Hoping this meets with your approval.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd) G. Stephenson, Master.



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