

EAST AFR. PROT
17007

17007
REC'D
REC'D 13 APR 15

Rowing
for Govr 196

1915
12th March

Last previous Paper.

LOSS OF THE S.S. "SYBIL"

Submits copy of proceedings of Court of Enquiry. Remarks as to constitution of Court. Executive Council consider Court took a very lenient view of way in which Commander Bruce handled his ship prior to the stranding but that in view of finding no more serious action should be taken than to caution him seriously. Regret's question of replacement of "Sybil" must be deferred for the present.

*Copy, enc'd in copy for return. to Army Secy 5 Mar 15
Adm. 358. 20 May 15
copy to Adm. 22383-15
copy enc'd in orig. to 12 persons & Magin 4/20
enc'd in copy for return to Secy 21 Nov 19 1915
copy 24/12/15*

*no statement (Bruce's file copy was available)
not read by G. Fielder.
This is rather a curious business. At the time when the "Sybil" struck, Comd. Bruce was under the orders of the military authorities, and there was no doubt therefore have a military enquiry & no more. As it happened - probably as a result of the somewhat anomalous position of our Lake Marine Civil Servants - a quasi-military enquiry was held and the matter was then considered by the Gov. Executive Council. The result is that Comd. Bruce should be seriously cautioned, but that no further action should be taken.*

Next subsequent Paper.
Adm. 22383

As the occurrence took place
under very conditions I think
we might send a copy of
resp. to Adm. & say that
if the L.C. concern him &
propose to express his views
with para. 5 of the

In a small service like this Apr 27/
the proceedings of the Board of Enquiry are
to be influenced by the fact that a
large of officers junior to the subject of the
enquiry - of the President was senior to him
as proposed Oct 28/15

I concur in Lt. Reynolds' view.
Fortunately the Rebel is one of our
oldest boats on the Lake.

As proposed? H. S. B.
28/12/15

at once
M. 25. 11. 15

17007
REC'D
MAR 15

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NAIROBI,
BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

March 12th 1915.

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SECRETORATE

No. 190

Sir,

In continuation of my cypher telegram No. 192 of the 16th of November last I have the honour to transmit herewith for your information a copy of the proceedings of the Court of Enquiry appointed to investigate the loss of the S.S. "Sybil" of the Uganda Railway Lake fleet.

Ag. Secy.
Enclosure
11

2. On the 12th of November I was informed by the Chief Staff Officer (Lieutenant Colonel Ward) that a Court of Enquiry was to be formed with the object of ascertaining whether negligence could be imputed to any officer in the matter. I felt therefore entitled to assume that the necessary formalities would be arranged in accordance with military procedure, and that I should be furnished in due course with a report from Colonel Ward.

3. Accordingly on receipt of the enclosed documents I caused a letter to be addressed to him, stating

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LEWIS (1915) COURT, P.C., M.P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,
11, DOWNING STREET,
LONDON, S.W.

stating that I had perused a copy of the proceedings of a Court of Enquiry on the grounding of the S.S. "Sybil", but that this Court appeared to have been more of the nature of a departmental body than a properly constituted tribunal such as I had been led to expect was being instituted by the military authorities, and I enquired - if the report which I had received was in fact to be considered that of the proper Court of Enquiry, - who convened the Court and what orders were given to it.

4. To this enquiry, dated the 30th of November last, no reply was vouchsafed until the 23rd of February. I was then informed that the Court was convened by Lieutenant R. M. Reynolds, Marine Superintendent, who had requested the Officer Commanding Troops, Kisumu, to detail a Military Officer to act as a member. Major Hickson had stated verbally that he did not consider it necessary for a military officer to act as President. No orders appear to have been given to the Court.

5. On receipt of this information I considered the whole question with my Executive Council who were of opinion that the Court of Enquiry took a very lenient view of the way in which Commander Bruce handled his ship prior to the stranding, but that in view of the finding of the Court no more drastic action should be taken than to caution him seriously and to impress upon him the necessity of exercising more seamanlike care in future.

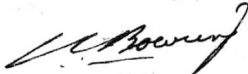
6. I regret that the question of the replacement of the S.S. "Sybil" must be deferred

for the present, but I will address a communication
to you on the subject as soon as I am in a position
to do so.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your humble, obedient servant,



in the absence of the
GOVERNOR

N.J. 1724

The Secretary of the Admiralty presents his compliments to the ~~Under~~ Secretary of State for the Colonies, and, in compliance with his request of the 29th. ultimo, begs to return herewith the original papers connected with the loss of the s.s. "Sybil", of the Uganda Railway Lake Fleet.

Admiralty, S.W.

10th. June 1915.

Gov. 17007/1915
G.P.

547

MAY
4

5 May 1915

Ans'd 22383

str.

DRAFT.

The Secretary,
Admiralty.

I am to transmit
to you for the conson of
the L. C. of the Army,
the accomp. copy of a
desp. & its enclosures
from the Govr. of the

MINUTE.

- Mr. Harper May 1/1915
- Mr. Bottomley 3. 5. 15 f.
- Mr.
- Mr.
- Sir G. Fiddes.
- Sir H. Just.
- Sir J. Anderson.
- Lord Islington.
- Mr. Harcourt.

Edsp relating to the
loss of the ss "Seydl"
of the Uganda Ry.
Lake fleet.

2. Subject to
Their Lordships' concurrence
Mr. Harcourt proposes

600
Copy 600 cars to Messrs 17 20th May 1915

12 March

1915
12 March

Agreement
contained in
paragraph 5 of

the Gov's despatch

2

(Signed) H. J. READ.

for the Under Secretary of State