

# TWO OF CREW ON WITNESS STAND

## CONNORS AND SHIELDS GIVE THEIR EVIDENCE

### Former Told of Leaving the Ship on Raft and of Trip to Turret Island.

(From Wednesday's Daily.)

Two witnesses, Frank Connors, a waiter on board the Valencia, and Thomas Shields, one of the seamen, gave evidence at yesterday afternoon's session of the commission appointed by the Dominion government to inquire into the wreck of the San Francisco liner.

Frank Connors stated that he knew nothing of the navigation of the ship from the time she left San Francisco. He was a waiter.

Asked to give his story of the wreck, witness told of the ship striking at about 12 o'clock. After the first shock he went among the passengers and assisted them to put on the preservers. Hearing the order, "All hands on deck," he went to his boat, No. 4, but found that it had already been lowered. While there he heard someone below shout out, "throw over a line." This a man standing near did, but the person in the water shouted again that he couldn't hold on because "he was numb." Hearing this he reached over and managed to grasp the man and hoist him upon deck.

Witness then went below and, with the assistance of others, took all kinds of eatables, including cold roasts, preserves and a number of loaves of bread, from the pantry, and distributed them among the lady passengers in the form of sandwiches, while the gentlemen were invited to "step up and help themselves."

Next morning hard tack, condensed milk and water were dispensed by the steward among those aboard.

He then told of the lines shot ashore, only one of which landed safely. A Greek attempted to swim ashore but failed. Another effort was made by one of the assistant engineers, but that also proved futile. Finally the line broke, the drift went on, and the ship washing against it and causing such friction that it soon parted.

That night the captain asked him to make some provision for the passengers. He pointed out that it would be cold and windy upon the upper deck, and that the women and children would need some shelter. But the latter refused to go below.

Witness told of sighting smoke early next morning, and finally of the approach of the steamers Queen, Salvo and Cear, and the cheer that was set up by the passengers at the sight and their subsequent disappointment when it was realized that nothing could be done to aid them.

The rafts were then launched, and he formed one of the party which went on the first raft. He recounted his experiences in drifting past Cape Beale and upon Turret Island. Reaching there he said that he climbed in a tree on Wednesday night, thinking it better to do that than to remain upon the damp ground. While asleep he fell, and then creeping on his hands and knees in the dark reached the shore, and some time next day was discovered by the Salvo's boat and treated with every hospitality.

Answering Capt. Gaudin, witness said that when he first came on deck all the boats had been launched. There was no panic that he knew of although he could hear all manner of exclamations coming from the water, such as "God Help Me," or "Oh, God, I'm drowning." Outside of this he didn't remember of any particular confusion. He couldn't say how many had taken up their positions in the rigging, but there were quite a number. The raft upon which he took passage had some difficulty in Getting Away from the ship, being dashed against her side on several occasions. He didn't know how the raft got away. It must have been carried by the current. Ten men started on the shore. Four survived, three were found dead on the raft, and three disappeared during the trip. He didn't believe that any boat built would have been able to live anywhere near the wreck in the sea that was prevailing on Wednesday.

To C. H. Lugin witness said that it would be impossible for him to estimate how long elapsed between the time the vessel struck and the boats were launched. Since joining the ship he had received no drill in connection with the small boats. There were notices posted all over the vessel outlining the stations of different members of the crew. No instructions were posted for the passengers. The lady passengers had been given an opportunity to take places on the rafts if they had so desired.

Answering to A. E. McPhillips witness said that he was an ordinary waiter on the steamer Valencia. He had a certain number of state-rooms to attend to, and had seen that the occupants were roused at the time of striking. All had been brought to the deck. When he went aboard the raft the sea was running heavily. The passengers had been invited to come, but declined, remarking that they might as well die there as by going aboard the raft. If the ladies had accepted the invitation they would probably have had to pass over a line from the ship. "Such a scheme was scarcely practical," commented counsel.

Mr. Lugin protested against such questions, stating that witness had already said that he didn't know when the answer was desired. Mr. Lawson objected to the harassing of witness upon idle points. "It seems to me counsel is unduly sentimental," commented Mr. McPhillips. The question was disallowed, and continuing his examination Mr. McPhillips was told by witness that he believed when on the way to Cape Beale that he was approaching the beach where the steamer Valencia was lying. The brush was thick, and it was impossible for them to follow the shore. The commission then adjourned until 10 o'clock this morning.

(From Wednesday's Daily.) The commission inquiring into the Valencia disaster did not sit until 10:45 o'clock this morning. Before the commencement of proceedings the commissioners were driven to the outer wharf by J. H. Lawson, Jr., representing the P. C. S. Company, where they inspected the raft which was picked up at Turret Island. They also examined a number of tulle life preservers which have just been brought from the scene.

H. J. Campbell, one of the surviving passengers, was first called. He was a commercial traveller, and was bound from San Francisco to Victoria at the time of the wreck. He could not say anything with reference to the navigation of the ship on the way to the coast. At the time the vessel struck he was in bed. Asked to give his story up to when rescued, he said that he had gone to his wife when the news of the accident reached him. He had found her putting on a preserver at the command of an officer. Requesting her not to be frightened he had gone to the deck and came down immediately to go to his wife. He was clothed, accompanied by his family he had then gone to the smoking-room. After a few minutes he had noticed the life boat being lowered. He demanded by whose orders that this was being done, and was told that the captain had commanded it. Realizing that the situation was serious, his wife and he had obtained places on the small boats which were immediately launched very evenly.

For some time they could see the ship, the search light illuminating the water for some distance. He entered the ship the oars, and he found it impossible to get his in shape. The Water Was Coming In, and one of the occupants stated that he couldn't get the plug in. His wife at about this juncture complained of being caught with the oars having freed her and being told that she was perfectly comfortable the boat struck the surf and turned turtle. He had not seen Mrs. Campbell since. Witness was washed ashore, and with a number of others spent the night near the bluff. Some oil was found in the boat which had been washed ashore. There were no rocks seen from the direction of the vessel. Next morning they made their way up the face of the cliff and striking the telegraph trail thought they were in the neighborhood of habitation. They met Bunker and another, who had landed at another point, and the party went along the trail until reaching Telegraph Hut, where Mr. Bunker succeeded in connecting with the wire and the news of the wreck was sent to the outside world. They were instructed to stay where they were, and did so until Friday. Answering Capt. Gaudin, witness said that he had heard someone shout "lower away" after he had entered the boat. There were about 15 in her, and only one of the crew. The other men saved were mostly Greeks or Austrians and men of that class. It wouldn't do to make any more of the boat, and he had followed. There had been no trouble in getting away from the ship. The sea was not very heavy. The Craft had Seemed to Hit a Rock, which precipitated its occupants into the sea. It was Wills, the navy boy, who had called out that the boat had got the plug to fit into the bottom. He used his hand to prevent the inflow of water. Seven men were saved from his boat. When he left the boat it should have been possible for assistance to reach the ship from the sea. While waiting for help on the trail they were sheltered by Telegraph Hut, a small cabin near Darling Creek. The relief party which came from the station at Bamfield had aided them materially. They did all they could to help them. He couldn't say whether from the Tuesday until the Wednesday that the hull broke up and the men were possible of extending tending help from the open sea. Up to the time he left the ship there was nothing to lead those aboard to believe that they were in imminent danger. The boats had been fitted with plugs and not rowlocks. He thought this was a handicap. Matters were made worse when one of the oars was lost. This put two oars on one side and a single one on the other, which confused the occupants. It was impossible for Logan to cross Darling Creek when he arrived at the scene. The stream was swollen and Bunker almost lost his life in attempting to get to the men ashore. Other futile efforts had been made, particularly by one man from the Bamfield station. Asked to describe the trail from Darling river to Bamfield he said "It is a terribly rough trail; the worst I have ever seen, and I've been over a good many bad ones." Questioned by C. H. Lugin, witness for the Dominion government, counsel said that the hills along the coast were not especially high, a matter of three hundred feet. It was quite feasible to construct a road there which might be used for the transportation of life saving apparatus from the beach to the shore. The surf reached the bluff near the wreck only at high water. At low tide a rocky, shelving beach, with about forty feet from the water to the foot of the cliff, was unobscured, and he never heard the order "All hands on deck." At least twenty minutes After the Ship Struck people were getting into No. 3 boat and no person appeared to be in charge. Only one member of the crew, Ritchie, a fireman, was there at the time. After losing the oar the boat turned about and drifted towards the surf. Asked if the boat had been manned by an officer and its proper complement of seamen what would have been the result, witness said there might have been a better chance of rescue. They would probably have kept out to sea. He didn't remember seeing any of the officers after the vessel struck. During the twenty minutes between the time she struck and his boat pulling away he tried to find someone to tell him what to do, but failed. He never saw any of the officers as far as he was aware. No effort was made to inform the passengers that the boats were about to be lowered. While in the small boat he could distinguish the trees upon the cliff against the sky. It was a moderately dark night, raining, but the wind wasn't blowing very heavily. To Capt. Gaudin he said that he thought the officers had ordered the launching of the boats. Answering A. E. McPhillips, K.C., counsel for the provincial government, witness said that there were fifteen passengers in the small boat he was in. He was in the boat about 1 o'clock when Bunker had telephoned the news of the disaster. This was on Tuesday. He asked for assistance and said that they were about ten miles

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Mr. Lugin contended that the present wasn't the time for such evidence. Capt. Gaudin didn't propose to permit such questioning. He promised that All the Documents with reference to the dispatch of aid would be produced during the progress of the inquiry. Mr. McPhillips wanted witness to say whether or not he had received in answer to his message for assistance until 9 o'clock that night, a period of no less than five hours. He thought such a thing was inconceivable. Witness, in connection with this, was being done to help his shipmates, and that it was hard to believe that he would be willing to remain inactive for the time mentioned without knowing that something was being done to help his shipmates. Mr. Lugin protested against such questions, stating that witness had already said that he didn't know when the answer was desired. Mr. Lawson objected to the harassing of witness upon idle points. "It seems to me counsel is unduly sentimental," commented Mr. McPhillips. The question was disallowed, and continuing his examination Mr. McPhillips was told by witness that he believed when on the way to Cape Beale that he was approaching the beach where the steamer Valencia was lying. The brush was thick, and it was impossible for them to follow the shore. The commission then adjourned until 10 o'clock this morning.

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Mr. Lugin contended that the present wasn't the time for such evidence. Capt. Gaudin didn't propose to permit such questioning. He promised that All the Documents with reference to the dispatch of aid would be produced during the progress of the inquiry. Mr. McPhillips wanted witness to say whether or not he had received in answer to his message for assistance until 9 o'clock that night, a period of no less than five hours. He thought such a thing was inconceivable. Witness, in connection with this, was being done to help his shipmates, and that it was hard to believe that he would be willing to remain inactive for the time mentioned without knowing that something was being done to help his shipmates. Mr. Lugin protested against such questions, stating that witness had already said that he didn't know when the answer was desired. Mr. Lawson objected to the harassing of witness upon idle points. "It seems to me counsel is unduly sentimental," commented Mr. McPhillips. The question was disallowed, and continuing his examination Mr. McPhillips was told by witness that he believed when on the way to Cape Beale that he was approaching the beach where the steamer Valencia was lying. The brush was thick, and it was impossible for them to follow the shore. The commission then adjourned until 10 o'clock this morning.

(From Wednesday's Daily.) The commission inquiring into the Valencia disaster did not sit until 10:45 o'clock this morning. Before the commencement of proceedings the commissioners were driven to the outer wharf by J. H. Lawson, Jr., representing the P. C. S. Company, where they inspected the raft which was picked up at Turret Island. They also examined a number of tulle life preservers which have just been brought from the scene.

H. J. Campbell, one of the surviving passengers, was first called. He was a commercial traveller, and was bound from San Francisco to Victoria at the time of the wreck. He could not say anything with reference to the navigation of the ship on the way to the coast. At the time the vessel struck he was in bed. Asked to give his story up to when rescued, he said that he had gone to his wife when the news of the accident reached him. He had found her putting on a preserver at the command of an officer. Requesting her not to be frightened he had gone to the deck and came down immediately to go to his wife. He was clothed, accompanied by his family he had then gone to the smoking-room. After a few minutes he had noticed the life boat being lowered. He demanded by whose orders that this was being done, and was told that the captain had commanded it. Realizing that the situation was serious, his wife and he had obtained places on the small boats which were immediately launched very evenly.

For some time they could see the ship, the search light illuminating the water for some distance. He entered the ship the oars, and he found it impossible to get his in shape. The Water Was Coming In, and one of the occupants stated that he couldn't get the plug in. His wife at about this juncture complained of being caught with the oars having freed her and being told that she was perfectly comfortable the boat struck the surf and turned turtle. He had not seen Mrs. Campbell since. Witness was washed ashore, and with a number of others spent the night near the bluff. Some oil was found in the boat which had been washed ashore. There were no rocks seen from the direction of the vessel. Next morning they made their way up the face of the cliff and striking the telegraph trail thought they were in the neighborhood of habitation. They met Bunker and another, who had landed at another point, and the party went along the trail until reaching Telegraph Hut, where Mr. Bunker succeeded in connecting with the wire and the news of the wreck was sent to the outside world. They were instructed to stay where they were, and did so until Friday.

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