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Sealing Commission.

(Thursday, Dec. 17.)

A special sitting was held yesterday morning to take the evidence of the Chief Engineer of the s.s. Florizel, which ship was set down to sail at noon.

John Reader, sworn, examined by the Minister of Justice.—Am. Chief Engineer s.s. Florizel, and was in ship last spring at the ice. The log kept by me is the engine room log.

To Dr. Lloyd.—Remember hearing that the Newfoundland crew went on board the Stephano and left again. It was very storm on Tuesday afternoon. The only anxiety he heard expressed was when Capt. J. Kean came into the mess room at 2 a.m. Wednesday, and said he was anxious about the Newfoundland crew, and wondered whether they had got on board their own ship. It was not unusual for the captain to come into the mess room at such a time of the night. The ship was at this time stopped for the night since about 8 p.m.

(Afternoon Sitting.)

Capt. J. Kean, continued, to Minister of Justice, had been forty-two springs at the ice, eight as ordinary sealer in various official positions, since in steam and sail. On March 31st last he was stirring about daylight when the weather was fine and very mild, just a draft of wind from the east. The sky got overcast later, and witness expected rain and fog. Towards noon there was very light pecking snow. The Stephano bore about N.W. from the Newfoundland, perhaps 4 or 5 miles away. The Bonaventure bore about N.N.E. 2 1/2 miles, the Florizel about N.E. by N. not so far by half a mile. No others in sight then. Did not see Newfoundland crew leaving their ship. Witness signalled the Newfoundland on Monday afternoon that he was in the seals. There was no other signalling with the Newfoundland. The crew of the Newfoundland were first seen by witness about an hour before they reached the Stephano at 11:20. Witness put out his crew to pick up seals and went towards the Newfoundland men to give them their dinner. There was one Stephano flag on the way to the Newfoundland. When the crew came aboard, the Stephano steamed south to a point estimated to be about three and a half miles from the Newfoundland and not far from a flag of the Florizel. Witness told Tuff the seals lay S.E. and N.N.W., but thought there were some to the S.W. Tuff said to witness when he came on board that it looked like falling weather, and witness replied yes, but it is mild and the glass does not show for a storm. When the men left the Stephano the weather was mild, scarcely any wind, with light snow. Witness could see the Newfoundland plainly. Did not know what direction the men took after leaving the Stephano. He was anxious to get back to his men, to finish his work, and reached them in about half an hour, when the wind was increasing and the snow

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except when it was very low or high. All through the storm the barometer was not exceptionally low. He had seen storms with fine glass and vice versa. There was no entry of barometer in his log of Monday, March 30th. He did not know of any steady fall between Monday evening and Tuesday noon. About 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday he had received a wireless message from Capt. Joe Kean of the Florizel asking him to look after the Florizel's men and he (Joe) would look after the Stephano's men. He had answered, "All right." He knew that Capt. Joe and the Florizel operator said the message sent to him was "You look after my men and the Newfoundland's, I will look after yours." But in the message received by him there was no mention of the Newfoundland. The message was by word of mouth and not in written form, and was brought to him by some man, but he did not know who the man was. Capt. Joe had sent, in the message on account of weather, so he said, but there was no weather at the time and he had told Joe he thought it a foolish message. When he picked up the Florizel's men he told them he had received a message from their captain to look after them. After the Stephano and Florizel exchanged crews, he steamed slowly south picking up pans and blowing his whistle and giving it extra puffs when he stopped, to let the Newfoundland's men know the Stephano was stopped, if they were following the Stephano's carcasses and coming towards the Stephano. He proceeded south till about 5 p.m. when he burned down near the Florizel flag, where he had picked up the Newfoundland's crew in the morning. The ice was too much packed for him to proceed further south in search, but he kept his whistle blowing till 8 o'clock. He did not send any wireless to any other ship that night or on Wednesday about the Newfoundland's men, nor did he search for them on Wednesday. When they did not come back to the Stephano he was satisfied they had made for their own ship, and he saw no reason why they should not get back to their own ship with its whistle blowing as he expected it would be. The first intimation witness had of the disaster was on Thursday morning, when he was informed that the Newfoundland had a signal up, to which reply was made. The Stephano was unable to move, and two men were sent to the Newfoundland to find out what was wrong. They returned saying that the men had not reached their ship. Witness then detailed the circumstances attending the rescue work, as also the wireless communications between the ships. It took the Stephano the whole of Thursday to get five miles, the ice being so tight and heavy. The Newfoundland was 5 or 6 miles from the dead members of her crew on Thursday morning. Don't know their respective positions on Wednesday, but the dead men were fully five miles from where they had apparently died on Wednesday. Witness described the positions of the ships on plan. The position of the dead men may be due to wheeling ice, but how the ice wheel is a mystery. Men seldom go more than 5 or 6 miles from a ship nowadays, formerly they went further, witness had been 12 miles. He thought there was no great risk unless a ship gets broken down. Because if the ice is loose and the ship is not broken down she can reach them; if the ice is tight the men can walk to her. There is undoubtedly risk to men at the sealfishery. Boats dropped with men would be useful in case of a storm coming. The circumstances connected with the Newfoundland disaster were exceptional as to weather; it was the worst storm in experience of witness, with no warning from the barometer. Witness would not permit his crew to remain on the ice all night, even with tents, if he could get them on board. Witness did not place great value on the Toronto weather forecast at the ice, owing to local atmospheric conditions. He saw no difficulty in sending the conditions of local atmosphere at the ice to Toronto, as additional data for the forecast man to work on. He had during the past three years' experience on the coastal boats been receiving the Toronto weather forecasts. It was wonderful the forecasts were so frequently correct. But they were often wrong. He had been told by the wireless man at Fogo that Toronto did not predict the storm of March 31st. He had however not verified this. Witness thought it would be difficult to tie the men down to distance, as they frequently go further than directed. Men should exercise care, and are not expected to run unreasonable risks. The practice with respect to noting barometer readings differs as between the ice voyages and ocean voyages. Witness considered there was greater risk in hauling than panning seals. He thought five miles would be a reasonable distance for men to go from a ship. In fifty-one years there have been two serious accidents. Witness thought it would be undesirable and cruel to prevent the crew of one ship from boarding another when their comfort and safety

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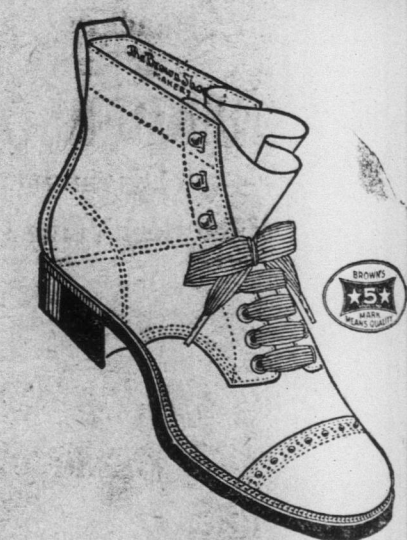
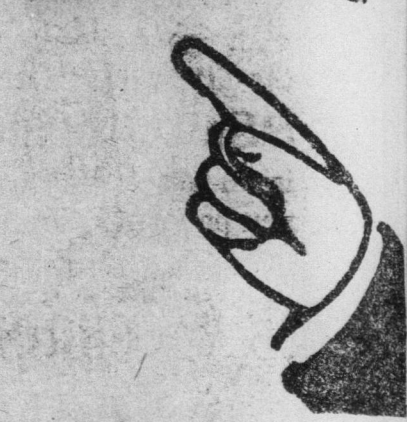
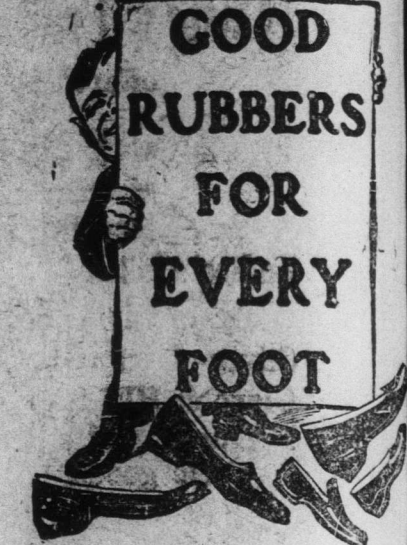
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"The Wolf of the City" shows the power of the press. The "Wolf" is a Star reporter whose nerves have never been shaken before this incident of the stormy career. There is nothing more interesting than newspaper work especially in a big city, and this film should be seen by all. There are also two very bright comedies: "When Father Wanted a Snake" and "The City Gratters."

There are only two nights more to hear the sweet voiced tenor, Arthur C. Huskins. Miss Margaret Ayer, soprano, who has a beautiful voice, is coming for the Nickel.

The regular weekly matinee for children takes place to-morrow afternoon. Extra pictures will be shown and the children are certain to enjoy themselves. They are well cared for and the films are specially arranged to suit them. Doors open at 2 o'clock and they should go early to secure seats.

Arrived on Monday by S. S. Stephano: Winter Keeping Apples — Kings, Baldwins, Wagners, Greenings, Ben Davids, Lemons, Cal. Oranges, Florida Oranges, large bunches Bananas, California Grapes, Blue and Red, in baskets and kegs; American Baldwins in brls. Special attention given to outport orders. Price list sent on request, at GLEESON'S, 108 Water Street East. P. O. Box 681. dec18,th,tf

CALENDAR.—We thank Mr. W. J. Edgar, agent for the North American Life Assurance Co., for the Company's Calendar for 1915.