

AIR MAIL

AMERICAN CONSULATE

Antofagasta, Chile, November 19, 1943.

Subject: Security of Liberty Ship SS. Charles N. McGroarty.

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report to the Department an incident on the cruise of the Liberty ship S.S. Charles N. McGroarty from San Francisco to Antofagasta via Southwest Pacific while in Antofagasta harbor on November 13, 14, 15 and 16, 1943.

Upon the request of the master, George Lewick, the purser, and other officers of the ship, who had made certain charges against one other in the question of the safety of the ship while under the control of the master during the voyage of the vessel across the south Pacific, I made an official investigation aboard ship while in the harbor here regarding these charges, and asked the local U.S. Naval Liaison Officer and the Grace Line Agent to sit in on a board with me to hear any charges that the officers might wish to make.

As a result of this investigation we concluded that the master had obviously endangered his ship at least twice on this trip through incompetence and an unstable state of mind superinduced by a mental and physical condition arising from a more or less chronic disease such as syphilis, for which, it is believed, he may have been receiving treatment in a cursory manner.

Upon the assurance of the chief mate, George F. Poppe, a very competent officer, the chief engineer, Thomas B. Anderson and the chief officer of the armed guard, Louis Cantel, Jr., that they were competent to take over control of the ship, should the skipper get out of line again, I decided not to relieve the master at this port, but to write this word of warning to the Department for what reference it may see fit to make of it, with the definite suggestion that the master of the ship Charles N. McGroarty, not be given another berth as skipper of an American vessel until he has been thoroughly examined

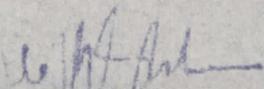
by

*File  
dup to memorandum  
Dusky*

by a physician and alienist.

The vessel should arrive in New York about December 10, 1943, on its return to the United States.

Respectfully yours,

  
Lee R. Blohm  
American Consul

885.9 (Original to Department)  
LRB:ez (Copy to Embassy, Santiago)