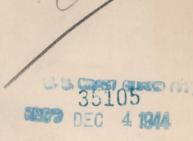
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1944 DEC 5 PM 2 49

Ind-2 DCGO, 11ND MIN S-595 28 November, 1944 MERCHANT MARINE



CONFIDENTIAL

To:

The Commandant (OMP)

Subj:

SS J. J. CONEY oil spill in the Columbia River; preliminary

investigation

Forwarded, approved.

Joseph Greenspun Acting

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NN 3-26-83-11

By Ed NARA. Date 5/12/7

Declassified NARA Project: NW 63684

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Case No.: MIN S-595

CONFIDENTIAL

MERCHANT MARINE HEARING UNIT ELEVENTH NAVAL DISTRICT LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 23 November, 1944

IN THE MATTER OF SS J. J. CONEY, OIL SPILL IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER.

SOURCE OF COMPLAINT: U. S. Coast Guard Intelligence, Portland, Oregon.

PERSONS INTERVIEWED: Kenneth L. Strawser, second mate, SS J. J. CONEY, 6608 1/2 Rugby Street, Huntington Park, California.

Lenard A. Losasso, machinist-pumpman, SS J. J. CONEY, Box 244, Route 5, Denver, Colorado.

FACTS: On 20 October, 1944, the SS J. J. CONEY, a tank vessel of American Registry, operated by the Hillcone Steamship Company, was tied up at the DuBoise Lumber Company dock in Vancouver, Washington. The vessel was engaged in delivering gasoline to the Fletcher Oil Company.

At or about 0240 on 20 October, 1944, the discharging of gasoline was completed and preparations were made for a line wash which was to start at 0300. The intervening 20 minutes were spent making the necessary changes in the pump room line-up. The second mate, Strawser, who was on watch, went down into the pump room to assist Losasso, the pumpman, in making the line-up. When all appeared in order for pumping water into the line from the sea suction, pumping was started, but shortly afterwards the second mate noticed that the pressure gauge did not register, which was unusual. He then checked the sea suction outlet from the deck and observed gasoline running into the river from the outlet. He immediately closed the deck valve on the discharge line, went down into the pump room again to further check on the line-up and found that a crossover valve was open. It is evident that the deck valve on the discharge line was not closed prior to opening the sea suction and starting the pump. Consequently, the gasoline in the line dropped and was allowed to run into the river through the sea suction as it by-passed the open crossover valve to the pump. After correcting this error in the line-up, the line wash was started at 0342 and completed at 0350.

As no trouble had been anticipated prior to the line wash, the valve from the shore tanks had been left open, and consequently, the gasoline in the line flowed back into the river because of the oversight in not closing the crossover

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valve previously mentioned.

It was estimated that about 100 barrels of gasoline was lost.

The U. S. Coast Guard was notified and a fire boat arrived at 0430, and this fire boat, in conjunction with the use of fire hose from the SS J. J. CONEY, dispersed the gasoline on the surface and out into the river.

Mr. Strawser, second mate, stated that he had had approximately 4 months experience as a licensed officer on tank vessels.

Mr. Losasso was making his first trip in the capacity of machinist-pumpman.

Mr. A. J. Wilkins, chief mate on the SS J. J. CONEY, gave Losasso a good reference in all respects.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION: It is the opinion of the undersigned Examining Officer that this particular oil spill was not the result of either misconduct or negligence, but rather from lack of tanker experience. Under the circumstances it was decided not to prefer charges, but, both men were advised as to the importance of avoiding oil spills, and of the fire hazards and serious disasters which might result from such spills.

It is recommended that no further action be taken and that the case be closed.

SVERRE S. ARNET

Lt. Commander, USCGR Examining Officer

23 November, 1944

Approved:

ADDISON S. ELLIOT Lt. Comdr., USCGR Officer in Charge