

April 15th/43

(P)  
Re: NMU and the SS John Mitchell.

Remarks:

The liberty ship John Mitchell of the Black Diamond Line with an NMU crew came into Baltimore, Md, on April 5th, from a trip to North Africa.

The NMU holds the contract with the Black Diamond SS Line.

There was a matter of overtime worked by the crew. This was O.K'd by both the Captain and the Chief Engineer for the engine department and was not contested by the Company who were about to pay same without question. In simple words, it was rated as bona fide overtime.

Agent Drury NMU port agent for Baltimore came on board and insisted that all overtime not specifically covered by the NMU contract be thrown overboard. " We have experts in the NMU headquarters in New York who have gone into this thing and have decided that overtime must be covered by the contract to be payable." The crew were exceedingly angry and accused Drury of working for the shipowners. However, he prevailed upon them that they would get no support at the NMU headquarters and succeeded in this maneuver. The crew couldnt understand it in view of the fact that the overtime sheets were not disputed by the Captain, Chief engineer or the Company itself.

Some decided to come to New York and report this matter to the NMU officials. Agent Stack was fully notified and immediately covered up the matter and whitewashed Agent Drury. However the crew who are chiselled of the overtime are not satisfied with the actions of the NMU officials nor the explanations given by Stack. There is trouble brewing if the AF of L seamens papers get hold of this, for the NMU officials.

It was alledged by crew members that the Chief mate on board this ship kept the escape hatch blocked so that it couldnt be opened in case of disaster, the entire trip in spite of protests by the engine room dept who would be trapped down below. Luckily she wasnt hit or attacked. One man informed me - "Its a good thing the Coastguard werent aboard to investigate conditions or it would have gone hard with this Mate."

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