RECORD GROUP 24

VOLUME 11846

FILE 034

OPEN

H.Q. 10
300M—5-42 (4538
N.S. 815—7-10

N.S. 034

DEPARTMEN

PROTECTIV

CE)

ARD OF INQUIRY.

CROSS REFERENCE

034

CENTRAL REGISTRY	DATE	P. A. OR B. F.	INITIALS	REFERRED TO	FOR REMARKS	INITIALS	DATE
		(If purpose for which referred cannot be expressed on one line, add minute to file and enter here "With Minute")					

PROTECTIVE CUSTODY - GEN.

N.S.

H.Q. 10
300M—5-42 (4585
N.S. 815—7-10

N.S. 034

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE (NAVAL SERVICE)

PROTECTIVE CUSTODY - JAPANESE FISHING VESSELS - BOARD OF INQUIRY.

CROSS REFERENCE

034

CENTRAL REGISTRY	DATE	P. A. OR B. F.	INITIALS	REFERRED TO	FOR REMARKS	INITIALS	DATE
		(If purpose for which referred cannot be expressed on one line, add minute to file and enter here "With Minute")					

N.S.

PROTECTIVE CUSTODY - JAPANESE

S. 1320f.
15M pads 200 11-40 (8013)
N.S. 815-9-1320f.

NAVAL MESSAGE

FILE 034 C/B

For use in Cypher or Coding Office only.

FCC

Originators Instructions: (Indication of Priority, Personal, NOTWT For Exercise).

CONFIDENTIAL

INTERCEPT GROUP

TO: NOI/C VANCOUVER (R) NADEN GIVENCHY

FROM: COPC

Reference N.S.H.Q's 2215/29

not to Naden and Givenchy, arrangements are to be made

to transfer guarding of Japanese vessels to Custodian

as from midnight 31st July 1942. Report earliest

subsequent date naval personnel can be withdrawn after

consultation with J.V.D.C. and Custodian

2132Z/30

Book or Table to be used for		Initials of Cypherer or Coder.	Time of Receipt in Cypher or Coding Office.	Date.
...ing or Coding.	Recyphering or Recoding.			
TKL	P/L W/T CODE	JB CAH KS	2142	30-7-42

S. 1320b.
200M Pads of 200
2-42-(3446-53)
N.S.815-9-1320B

NAVAL MESSAGE

For use in Signal Department only

SS.

FILE 634 CB

Originators Instructions:
(Indication of Priority, Intercept Group, etc.)

No. of Groups:

TO: NOi/c Vancouver (R) Naden, Givenchy

FROM: C.O.P.C.

Write Across

Hasten reply to C.O.P.C.'s 2132/30 re guard for 5

Japanese fishing vessels. 10

15

20

25

30

1956Z/3. 35

40

45

Re. Report date Naval guard can be withdrawn. 50

System	P/L Code or Cypher	Time of Receipt	Time of Despatch	Operator	Date
Tel. T/T.	P/L.	2006Z.		CK CAN GP	2.9.42

S. 1320b.
200M Pads of 200
2-42-(3446-53)
N.S.815-9-1320B

NAVAL MESSAGE

FILE 034 - 2

For use in Signal Department only SS.

Originators Instructions:
(Indication of Priority, Intercept Group, etc.)

No. of Groups:

TO: C.O.P.C. (R) Givenchy, Naden

FROM: Naval Supt. Esquimalt.

Write Across

Oi/c New Westminster report handing over of remaining	5
Japanese Fishing vessels to Custodian as from noon	10
today 5th August.	15
	20
	25
	30
2321Z/5.	35
	40
	45
	50

System	P/L Code or Cypher	Time of Receipt	Time of Despatch	Operator	Date
Tel. P/L.	P/L.	00062/6.		MP. PC.	5-8-42.

S. 1320f.
15M pads 200 11-40 (8013
N.S. 815-9-1320f.

NAVAL MESSAGE

For use in Cypher or Coding Office only. JM

FILE 024

Originators Instructions: (Indication of Priority, Personal, NOTWT For Exercise).

INTERCEPT GROUP

TO: N.S.H.Q. (R) Naden, Givenchy, NOi/c Vancouver, Naval Supt.

FROM: C.O.P.C.

Your 2215/29.

Custody of Japanese Fishing Vessels at New Westminster

transferred to Custodian For Enemy Property to date

5th August 1942

2101z/6

(P.C. 10-5-11)

Book or Table to be used for		Initials of Cypherer or Coder.	Time of Receipt in Cypher or Coding Office.	Date.
Cyphering or Coding.	Recyphering or Recoding.			
P/N P/L	W/T TYPE X	DA PC	2114z/6	6/8/42

BOARD OF INQUIRY

RE

JAPANESE FISHING VESSELS

AT

ANNACIS ISLAND

BRITISH COLUMBIA

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MINUTES OF BOARD OF INQUIRY HELD ON SHORE IN THE NAVAL BASE AT VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, AT 0900, ON FRIDAY, 6TH MARCH, 1942, TO HOLD A FULL AND CAREFUL INVESTIGATION INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THE SINKING OF AND DAMAGE TO, JAPANESE FISHING VESSELS SEIZED AND IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY AT ANNACIS ISLAND AND TO ASCERTAIN WHAT MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY THE NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE, VANCOUVER (A) FOR THE SAFE CUSTODY OF THESE VESSELS (B) THE REMEDY AND REPORTED SINKING AND DAMAGE TO VESSELS.

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD -

Acting Captain W.B.L. Holms, Royal Canadian Navy

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD -

Acting Commander J. McCulloch, Royal Canadian Navy (Temp.)

A/Commander (E) B.R. Spencer, Royal Canadian Navy.

WITNESS: R. St.Claire Carter, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official No. A.3162 - CALLED:

1. Q. Are you R. St. Claire Carter, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official Number A.3162?

   A. Yes, sir.

Witness Cautioned

2. Q. This Board is assembled to hold a full and careful inquiry into the circumstances attending the sinking of and damage to Japanese fishing vessels seized and in protective custody at Annacis Island and to ascertain what measures have been taken by the Naval Officer-in-Charge, Vancouver, (a) for the safe custody of these vessels and (b) the remedy and reported sinking and damage to vessels.

   A. I understand sir.

3. Q. When did you arrive at Annacis Island?

   A. On the 12th December, 1941, sir. I left Esquimalt on the 11th.

4. Q. Did you report to anyone on your arrival there?

   A. Well, sir, I came over with Lieutenant Draney, and when we arrived in Vancouver he told me to carry on to my home - my home is in Vancouver, sir - and he would phone me. Lieutenant Draney went to the office of the Naval Officer-in-Charge, Vancouver, and received instructions, then he contacted me and we proceeded to Annacis Island together.

5. Q. How many seized Japanese boats, if any, were there at Annacis Island when you arrived out there on the 12th December, 1941?

   A. I would say approximately 150.

6. Q. Were these seized boats?

   A. Yes, sir.

.....2

WITNESS: R. St. Claire Carter, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official No. A.3162 - CALLED:

7. Q. How were these boats moored, as far as you remember?

A. About 25 of the larger vessels were moored on the Annacis Island side of the dyke from the light up to about a point abreast of Shoal Point. About 125 of the gill-netters and the collector type (small vessels) were moored from the upper dolphins opposite Robson Island, fore and aft, with the dyke, in rows up to 15 or 16 abreast, which meant that about 6 or 7 boats were on the Robson Island side of the dolphins. The inner boat was the only one that was secured and that was secured to the Annieville Dyke. All the other boats abreast of this, 14 or 15 in number, were secured to the next boat to it.

8. Q. On your arrival with Lieutenant Draney, and after having looked over the situation, did you consider these boats were moored in a safe position and in a safe manner?

A. No, sir, I did not.

9. Q. What do you mean by that?

A. Firstly, sir, the way the boats were moored. The mooring lines of the boats were very light and the boats were not moored on a systematic basis or in a seamanlike manner. They were brought in and just moored together, one moored to the dyke and the next one moored to it, and so on.

10. Q. It would appear from your statement, therefore, that each boat that arrived was moored up rapidly without any consideration for the safety of the boats in that group. Is that correct?

A. Yes, sir. I might add that the boats were brought in by the Japanese themselves, in some cases, and they would come up river in groups of 4 or 5 abreast already moored together. They would bring their boats in and moor them to the best holding ground they could find, irrespective of where the other boats were, as long as they could get their own before the dolphins. The boats were not in a definite line and more or less jumbled up.

11. Q. Was there any Naval officer or rating in charge of the mooring up and supervising of these vessels when you arrived?

A. No, sir, I do not believe there was. I believe that was carried out by the Naval vessels which were towing the groups in.

12. Q. Did you take any action for the safety of these boats when you saw the condition they were in?

A. Yes, sir. I commissioned two small boats from the group and we immediately proceeded to run lines fore and aft to the dolphins from various points in the lines. That was the first thing we did.

13. Q. Did you do that on your own initiative, or did you receive any orders from the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver?

A. I did not receive any orders, sir.

.....3

WITNESS: R. St. Claire Carter, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official No. A.3162 - CALLED:

14. Q. Did you have anyone to help you?

A. Yes, sir. I had Murray Smith, Chief Motor Mechanic, and two days later we received a draft from H.M.C.S. "DISCOVERY" I believe about 20 men. They were just new entries, and not very competent.

15. Q. What were your orders when you were sent there?

A. To dismantle and immobilize these vessels as they were received.

16. Q. As this Board understands it, then, you and one or two of your motor mechanic assistants were all alone from the 12th to the 14th December, 1941, when the guard party arrived from H.M.C.S. "DISCOVERY" and had no special orders other than those to immobilize the engines of the vessels. Is that correct?

A. Yes, sir.

17. Q. To your knowledge, were any vessels sunk when you arrived on the 12th December, 1941?

A. Yes, sir. There were three vessels on the beach at Annacis Island when I arrived there and one of them was under water. The boats could not be repaired as they were rotten. They were towed in under water and beached when they arrived.

18. Q. Do you know if any boats were sinking at their moorings?

A. Not at the time we arrived, sir, although some of the vessels had water in them.

19. Q. Do you know if any arrangements had been made for the pumping of them?

A. No, sir.

20. Q. No vessels had actually sunk at their moorings, then, on your arrival, or become damaged?

A. No, sir, although there were several vessels that were damaged and presumed that it was through towing.

21. Q. To your knowledge, when did the first vessel at the dyke mooring sink?

A. I went out on Christmas morning and found that one boat had sunk. It was a boat in a group of about 14, and about in a line with the piling. This had sunk during the night.

22. Q. What, then, was it's condition and the condition of the remaining vessels in it's group when you arrived on the scene?

A. The vessel that was sunk was all right and the vessels moored alongside were all right at that time. It was a small boat and it was moored to a collector - that is about a 40 foot boat - on one side of it. They all went aground when the tide failed. The tide rose and this large boat had fallen over on the small one. The small boat, therefore, could not rise.

.....4

WITNESS: R. St. Claire Carter, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official No. A.3162 - CALLED:

23. Q. Your answer indicates that there was insufficient water for mooring these vessels and that the mooring was unsafe except at certain states of the tide only. Is that correct?

A. Yes, sir.

24. Q. Did you report this incident to the necessary authorities?

A. Yes, sir.

25. Q. To whom did you make your report?

A. Lieutenant Draney, sir.

26. Q. What did your report consist of?

A. I stated that if we did not move these vessels down from the shoal water that by the time we had a few more in we would be having a lot of trouble. That was on the 26th December, I believe. This was a verbal report.

27. Q. Did Lieutenant Draney indicate to you that he would make the necessary arrangements to overcome this unsatisfactory situation?

A. Yes, sir, I believe he did. At the time there was a discussion regarding putting the boats around Shoal Point up on the Island. We went over there at this time and checked the Island for this purpose. Lieutenant Draney said we were going to put all the boats up anyway, and that was the way it was left.

28. Q. To your knowledge, were any steps taken to prevent a recurrence of this sinking, due to the boats being moored on shoal ground, and which had already caused the sinking of one vessel?

A. Well, sir, these boats were coming in at about 125 a day, from about 1600 on, which meant that myself and the small working party of about 8 men - 8 to 10 men - were kept hard at work sometimes until about 0100 the next morning, mooring them up in the deeper water adjacent to Annieville Dyke running out on Shoal Point. Some of them, however, had to be moored on the Robson Island side of the dolphins, notwithstanding that it was known to be shallow water, as there was such congestion at the entrance to this backwater, the entrance had to be kept clear and it was considered that even though these were moored on foul ground, as we now had a party we considered that we could prevent further sinkings. However, we ran kedges out to hold the boats apart and hoped that this would avoid any further sinkings. At this time, there were about 950 vessels and the river froze. This condition prevented us from getting these boats away from the foul mooring, where they had only been put as a temporary measure before moving them to a better place. This was about the 6th January, 1942, as far as I can remember.

29. Q. Is the Board to understand, then, that this ice condition which occurred about the 6th January, 1942, was the cause of a great number of sinkings?

A. Yes, sir.

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WITNESS: R. St. Claire Carter, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official No. A.3162 - CALLED:

30. Q. Prior to this, however, the Board has only been told of one sinking?

A. Yes, sir.

31. Q. Is it correct that until this ice condition set in that there had been only this one sinking?

A. No, sir. About 10 other boats had sunk in the meantime, due mostly to an unseaworthy condition on arrival.

32. Q. Do you consider, or not, that the foul mooring ground was partially responsible for these other 10 sinkings?

A. Yes, sir, I do. If it was not for that foul ground we probably would not have lost these boats.

33. Q. Will you tell the Board, then, what had been done from 12th December, 1941, when you arrived, until this ice condition set in about the 6th or 7th January, 1942, to alleviate this danger?

A. Practically nothing, sir.

34. Q. To your knowledge, had reports been made as to the danger of doing nothing?

A. I believe that the difficulty was realized, sir, but as the boats were arriving so quickly all that could be done was to safely moor the new arrivals and no time was left to re-moor the other vessels that were moored on the foul ground originally.

35. Q. During the period up to approximately the 7th January, 1942, when this ice condition started, you state there were about 10 or 11 sinkings. To your knowledge, were any inspections carried out by the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, or any of his staff?

A. Yes, sir. Lieutenant Commander J.M. Smith, R.C.N. (Temp.) arrived out nearly every day.

36. Q. To your knowledge, did the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, come out to make any inspections?

A. Not that I can recall, sir. He was, however, out later on.

37. Q. Did Lieutenant Commander Smith leave any orders for the safety of these vessels that you know of?

A. We discussed what we were doing and he seemed to be satisfied, and suggested that we carry on as we were doing. He also inferred that he would get more men out. I may say, sir, that from the first day I arrived out there I requested that portable pumps be supplied. However, these pumps were not supplied until the 18th January, 1942. This meant that all the vessels had to be bailed by hand until these pumps were provided, which of course also meant that my working party were limited in their work.

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WITNESS: R. St. Claire Carter, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official No. A.3162 - CALLED:

38. Q. Do you know why these pumps were not supplied to you until the 18th January?

A. I was in touch with Chief E.R.A. Murray Blannin at the Naval Officer in Charge's office on several occasions and I was informed that all was being done and that we would get them just as soon as possible. I called in at the Naval Officer in Charge's office myself and saw several signals about them, trying to hurry them up. On about the 16th or 17th January I informed them that the condition would become so serious that it would be beyond repair. The vessels were going down faster than we could lift them. The ice had set in then. We had to break the ice and bail out the boats with buckets.

39. Q. Were you placed in charge of these salvage operations?

A. Yes, sir.

40. Q. On whose authority?

A. I do not know, sir.

41. Q. Did you not receive any direct orders from the office of the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver?

A. No, sir. I never received any definite orders, but Lieutenant Commander Smith and everybody else came to me to ask what I was doing. I assumed, therefore, that I had been placed in charge.

42. Q. Did you at any time receive any definite instructions or orders in writing?

A. Not during the bad time, sir. Lieutenant Commander Smith would come out and anything that he wanted done he would ask me. However, I would not say that I had NEVER received any written orders as some days when Lieutenant Commander Smith did not come out I would receive a note as to what to do.

43. Q. Will you explain briefly to the Board what salvage operations you gave orders for?

A. Yes, sir. When these boats first started to go down about Christmas time, we proceeded to clear the line away from the sunken boat and put a line on that boat, if it was not too deep water and would make it fast at night. Then on the flat tide we would put 2 or 3 boats on to it and pull it on to the shallow flats where it would go aground at night. We would bail out and then float it and put it back in line.

44. Q. Did you get assistance from the New Westminster Public Works Salvage Vessel for this?

A. Not at that time. Mr. Reed, who is I believe an M.P. from New Westminster, came out to see us in operation one day and mentioned the conditions under which we were working - I mean the ice conditions. He asked me if there was any way the Public Works Department could help us and I asked him for the "SAMSON" as at that time the boats were sinking alongside the dyke. Mr. Reed said that we could have the "SAMSON" and that he would be pleased to render any other assistance - would, in fact, be glad to do so.

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WITNESS: R. St. Claire Carter, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official No. A.3162 - CALLED:

45. Q. Was this purely on your request, made directly to Mr. Reed, at about 11 a.m. that day?

A. Yes, sir, definitely; the "SAMSON" came alongside at about 1:30 that afternoon and rendered assistance in the lifting of the vessels. Those were the vessels that were in the deep water.

46. Q. In your opinion, if you had had the use of the "SAMSON" at an earlier date, could you have prevented a great number of the sinkings that did occur?

A. I would not think so, sir.

47. Q. Could the "SAMSON" not have taken them away from the foul ground?

A. I do not think so. We did everything there that we could, weather conditions allowing us.

48. Q. When the ice began to form about the 10th January, did you take any action to relieve the ice pressure from these vessels, which pressure was forcing them on to the dyke?

A. Yes, sir. We commissioned the "JESSIE ISLAND NO.9", a large seiner, and used her to break the ice.

49. Q. On whose instructions did you carry out this operation?

A. I did it entirely on my own, sir.

50. Q. Did any sinkings or major damage occur to the larger vessels which were moored in deep water on good mooring ground alongside the dyke?

A. Yes, sir.

51. Q. What caused that damage or sinking?

A. The ice pressure holding the boat solid against the dyke piling. The tide would fall and leave the boat hung up on the stringer and this also worked the other way, as the reverse occured on the rising tide.

52. Q. It would appear, then, that had no boats been secured to the dyke and if the boats had been moored in deep water, these sinkings, apart from those vessels which were unseaworthy, would not have occurred. Is that your opinion or not?

A. I do not think much of it would have occurred, sir. As a matter of fact, I believe that there would have been very little trouble had the vessels been moored away from the dyke and in deep water. However, no proper holding facilities had been provided.

53. Q. As far as you were aware, were any arrangements under way to provide berthing facilities?

A. I suggested to Lieutenant Commander Smith, and also to Lieut. Commander Sadd on one occasion, that we had to have dolphins for the safe mooring of these boats, and that this was ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. We were holding them on lines, 15 or 16 lines out, and also on kedge anchors, which was very unsatisfactory.

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WITNESS: R. St. Claire Carter, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official No. A.3162 - CALLED:

54. Q. At about what date did you inform Lieutenant Commander Smith and Lieutenant Commander Sadd that if the boats were to be moored there that dolphins were to be provided?

A. About the 5th January, 1942.

55. Q. Was that after the first 10 vessels had sunk?

A. Yes, sir. We discussed dolphins before that though, I think round about the 1st of January.

56. Q. Were charts and tidal information, etc., given and provided to you, or those in charge of the operations?

A. No, sir.

57. Q. Did you not try to get this information from the office of the Naval Officer in Charge?

A. I asked the Naval Officer in Charge's representative - that is, our own barracks at New Westminster - to get me tide books but they were not forthcoming, so I get them myself from the firm of McLennan, McFeely and Prior Limited.

58. Q. On what date did you get them?

A. 15th January, 1942.

59. Q. How long did Lieutenant Draney remain with you?

A. One week, sir.

60. Q. After Lieutenant Draney left, which officer was in charge at New Westminster?

A. Chief Skipper Gibson, sir.

61. Q. How long did Chief Skipper Gibson remain in charge?

A. One day, sir.

62. Q. Who then assumed charge?

A. Chief Skipper Kennedy, sir.

63. Q. How long did he remain in charge?

A. Two days, sir.

64. Q. Who relieved Chief Skipper Kennedy?

A. Sub Lieutenant Leeming, sir.

65. Q. How long did Sub Lieutenant Leeming remain in charge?

A. I believe it was about two weeks, and he was relieved by Sub Lieutenant Ross and the other two Sub Lieutenants who a rrived from H.M.C.S. "NADEN".

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WITNESS: R. St. Claire Carter, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official No. A.3162 - CALLED:

66. Q. Is there anything else you would like to add in order to clarify the situation under investigation?

A. Yes, sir. I would like to add that serious fog existed approximately ten days during the ice condition of about the 6th or 7th of January. During this intense fog about 100 boats were shifted to safer moorings, down the stream. 700 boats were moved in less than a week during this very difficult fog and ice condition, when visibility was nil. I would like to commend all those of the working party who carried out this operation with me at that time as a great number of them have never been to sea and yet carried out this operation in the fog in a most commendable manner.

67. Q. Chief Motor Mechanic Carter, it would appear that you used your initiative and the Board considers that you took all measures within your power for the safety of these vessds.

A. Thank you, sir.

WITNESS WITHDREW

WITNESS: Murray S. Smith, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official No. A.441 - CALLED:

68. Q. Are you Murray S. Smith, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official No. A.441?

A. Yes, sir.

Witness Cautioned

69. Q. On what date did you arrive at New Westminster to work on the Japanese Fishing vessels impounded and moored off Annacis Island?

A. I believe it was the 16th or 17th December, 1941, sir.

70. Q. Please state briefly the condition of these boats when you arrived?

A. When I arrived they were in fair condition. That is to say, the boats mostly were not provided with tarpaulins over their hatches and as it was rainy weather, their bilges filled up rapidly with water.

71. Q. Did you consider that they were moored in a safe manner and in safe, deep water?

A. At first they were. The latter part of the time they were not. When I got there, there were about 400 or 500 and they were tied at the low end of the piling and as the number increased they had to be tied some place, so gradually they were tied on the inside further up the dolphins, into shallow water, for the simple reason that they had no other place that was secure to moor them.

WITNESS: Murray S. Smith, Chief Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, Official No. A.441 - CALLED:

72. Q. As all available safe moorings were apparently taken up by about the first 200 or 300 vessels, it therefore appears that all subsequent moorings were of necessity forced into foul and shallow ground. Knowing this, do you know if any steps were taken to alleviate this unsatisfactory condition of mooring the vessels on the foul ground?

A. I should like to explain, sir, that from the 19th December to 21st February, I was Engineer in Charge of the "HOWE SOUND IV" and I was occupied with her continuously. Therefore, I really cannot say what action was taken to better this unfavourable situation.

73. Q. Who appeared to you to be in charge of the operations for the safety of these vessels at Annacis Island when you arrived and during the period of your time?

A. Lieutenant Draney, sir, was there when I arrived and was apparently in charge, but he was not there on my return.

74. Q. Who, then, was in charge on your return?

A. I do not know, sir.

75. Q. Who appeared to be taking charge on your return?

A. Chief Motor Mechanic Carter, sir.

76. Q. Did he appear to have the situation under his control?

A. Not altogether, sir.

77. Q. What do you mean by that remark?

A. Because he could not be everywhere at once. Everybody appeared to go to him for guidance and advice.

78. Q. Do you consider that he was giving his full time and energy to the work in hand?

A. Yes, sir, I do.

79. Q. Do you consider, then, that he was working to the best of his ability for the safety of the vessels?

A. Yes, sir.

WITNESS WITHDREW

WITNESS: Hugh M. Cowan, Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, Official No. V.13768 - CALLED:

80. Q. Are you Hugh M. Cowan, Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, Official Number V.13768?

A. Yes, sir.

Witness Cautioned

81. Q. When did you arrive at New Westminster for work in connection with the Japanese Fishing vessels moored in the vicinity of Annacis Island?

A. On the 28th December, sir.

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WITNESS: Hugh M. Cowan, Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, Official No. V.13768 - CALLED:

82. Q. Will you please tell the Board briefly what was the situation with regard to these vessels when you arrived at New Westminster?

A. They were all moored alongside the dyke and there was ice. However, the big freeze up was not until the middle of January. The boats were frozen in and fog appe red the day after I arrived. There were about 25 vessels sunk by then, by the ice.

83. Q. To your knowledge, what action was under way to reduce these sinkings and for the safety of the vessels?

A. We started hand bailing operations and hand pumping as no motor pumps were provided, and vessels were also being taken down and re-moored, as opportunity arose and working parties permitting, in safer moorings.

84. Q. Do you know whether anyone had requested that a motor pump be supplied?

A. Yes, sir.

85. Q. By whom?

A. Chief Motor Mechanic Carter, sir. I believe that 5 in number had been asked for.

86. Q. Had any of these pumps been supplied when you arrived?

A. No, sir.

87. Q. Who appeared to you to be in charge of these operations for the safety of these vessels when you arrived?

A. Chief Motor Mechanic Carter, sir.

88. Q. Do you consider that Chief Motor Mechanic Carter was giving all his energies and efforts to the safety of these vessels?

A. I do, sir.

89. Q. Was he working hard?

A. Night and day, sir.

90. Q. Do you consider that he had sufficient assistance?

A. No, sir.

91. Q. While you were there, were any visits paid by Commander Borrie, the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver?

A. I do not remember Commander Borrie visiting the area, but I do remember that Lieutenant Commander Smith paid frequent visits, and that he held discussions with Chief Motor Mechanic Carter, going over the situation of the boats together.

92. Q. Is there anything else you wish to say with regard to this investigation?

A. Well, sir, the working parties under Chief Motor Mechanic Carter and myself raised about 100 vessels, sometimes working nights when the tide was down. All these boats were raised before Lieutenant Commander Elfert and Commander

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WITNESS: Hugh M. Cowan, Motor Mechanic, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, Official No. V.13768 - CALLED:

92. A. (Continued)
McCulloch took charge of the operations.

WITNESS WITHDREW

WITNESS: Sub-Lieutenant F. Lefevre, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (Temporary) - CALLED:

93. Q. Are you Sub-Lieutenant F. Lefevre, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (Temporary)?

A. Yes, sir.

Witness Cautioned

94. Q. On what date did you arrive at New Westminster with a working party from H.M.C.S. "NADEN I"?

A. On the morning of 31st December, 1941.

95. Q. Were there any other officers with you?

A. Yes, sir. Sub-Lieutenants Ross and Vincent, sir.

96. Q. Who was in charge?

A. Sub-Lieutenant Ross, sir.

97. Q. Who placed him in charge?

A. Lieutenant Commander Harrison, 1st Lieutenant, R.C.N. Barracks, prior to the party leaving H.M.C.S. "NADEN".

WITNESS WITHDREW

WITNESS: Sub-Lieutenant S.F. Ross, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, (Temporary) - CALLED:

98. Q. Are you Sub-Lieutenant S.F. Ross, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (Temporary)?

A. Yes, sir.

99. Q. Were you sent in charge of a party from H.M.C.S. "NADEN I" with two other Sub-Lieutenants and approximately 60 men to New Westminster to take over guard of various numbers of Japanese fishing vessels which had been impounded and moored in the vicinity of Annacis Island?

A. Yes, sir.

Witness Cautioned

100. Q. When did you arrive at New Westminster?

A. On the morning of the 31st December, 1941.

101. Q. Did you contact the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, prior to your arrival at New Westminster?

A. I reported to Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, for instructions before going to New Westminster.

WITNESS: Sub-Lieutenant S.F. Ross, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, (Temporary) - CALLED:

102. Q. What instructions did you receive from the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, or his representative?

A. Before leaving Naval Barracks, the Executive Officer gave me to understand on the limited information available to him, that we were being sent over as a guard on these impounded Japanese fishing boats and instructions for a guard of this nature were given to me. However, I was instructed to report to the office of the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, to get definite orders of what was required of us. I reported to Naval Officer in Charge on arrival in Vancouver and interviewed Lieutenant Commander Smith. He gave me no definite instructions.

103. Q. Did he give you ANY instructions?

A. Well, Lieutenant Commander Smith accompanied me out to New Westminster and looked the situation over with me. Some instructions of a minor nature were given on the way out and further instructions were given after our arrival at New Westminster.

104. Q. Were these instructions written or verbal?

A. Verbal, sir.

105. Q. Will you please tell the Board, briefly, what was the gist of these instructions?

A. One was to guard the vessels. Provide working parties. Keep the boats afloat, etc.

106. Q. Did he give you any orders or instructions as to removing certain vessels that were moored on foul ground into safe moorings - that is, specific instructions?

A. No, sir, not at that time.

107. Q. Did he make mention of special attention being given to the safety of a number of vessels which were moored on foul ground?

A. I cannot remember definitely that he gave any specific instructions that day. However, from then on, numerous discussions were held, generally, as to the safety of the vessels and I was given to understand from these discussions that a great number of vessels would eventually have to be moved to safer billets.

108. Q. Briefly, what was the situation with regard to these vessels on your arrival?

A. There were about 900 vessels all moored inside the dyke. Of these 900 vessels, I did see that 200 or 300 of them were moored on the foul ground between dolphins opposite Shoal Point. The remainder were moored at the lower end of the dyke in deep water. There were a number of vessels which had already been beached on Annacis Island in the vicinity of Shoal Point, and there were a certain number of vessels sunk at their moorings, mostly the smaller vessels on the foul ground. To my knowledge, all the vessels that sunk at their moorings were those moored on the foul ground higher up by the middle of the dyke.

WITNESS: Sub-Lieutenant S.F. Ross, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, (Temporary) - CALLED:

109. Q. Whom did you consider was in charge prior to your arrival?

A. Sub-Lieutenant Leeming was there but I understand he was the officer in charge of the Discovery guard, whom we relieved.

110. Q. Whom do you consider was in charge of the work parties for the care and maintenance of these vessels?

A. Chief Motor Mechanic Carter was the senior motor mechanic and appeared to be in charge of the motor mechanics. I assumed he was working under the orders of the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver. Therefore, we did not give him any instructions. He seemed to be capable and having been there from the beginning was completely familiar with the situation. Lieutenant Commander Smith told me this when I arrived. Lieut. Commander Smith gave me to understand that I was to organize my party into patrols, sentries, working parties, etc. but was to co-operate in the work being done by Chief Motor Mechanic Carter and his party who had their instructions from Naval Officer in Charge's office. However, Lieutenant Commander Smith did not infer that in an emergency I was not in complete charge. Of course, Chief Motor Mechanic Carter had been there from the start and was familiar with the situation and the work which had been done on these vessels.

111. Q. To your knowledge, did Commander Borrie visit the Japanese fishing vessels at Annacis Island whilst you were there and prior to the 24th January, 1942?

A. I cannot remember whether he did or not. However, I did interview him in his office two or three days after our arrival, at New Westminster, but received no further instructions than those which I had received from Lieut. Commander Smith.

112. Q. Did any vessels sink whilst you were in charge?

A. Yes, sir.

113. Q. To whom did you report these sinkings?

A. Lieutenant Commander Smith.

114. Q. Verbally or in writing?

A. Verbally; as he visited New Westminster nearly every day I reported the situation daily to him, either by telephone or verbally when he visited New Westminster. In those reports I reported what vessels had sunk since the last time I saw him.

115. Q. Did your reports contain any suggestions as to bettering the situation, such as taking them away from there?

A. Yes, sir, I did make suggestions as to bettering the situation, especially with regard to the danger of the vessels moored on this foul ground.

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WITNESS: Sub-Lieutenant S.F. Ross, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, (Temporary) - CALLED:

116. Q. Were these suggestions of yours acted upon?

A. They were acted upon as soon as it was possible for us to do so, owing to the limited number of ratings available and the weather conditions prevailing. Orders were received on approximately 7th or 8th January in a signal from Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, that we were to catalogue all vessels and that this was to be carried out as soon as possible. This meant that I had to reduce the number of my pumping parties and mechanics to carry out this work which took about three or four days. However, I was instructed to carry on with the purport of the signal as soon as possible and as I anticipated a number of vessels sank during this period through lack of care and maintenance and bailing parties.

117. Q. Did you have an adequate pumping equipment to cope with the number of vessels under your charge?

A. No, sir.

118. Q. Did you make representation to Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, to provide better pumping facilities?

A. No, sir, because I had been given to understand on my arrival that pumps had already been ordered.

119. Q. When did these pumps arrive?

A. Two pumps arrived approximately 8th or 9th January. One arrived about the 12th and two additional pumps arrived about the 22nd January. Many times during this interval I requested information as to when these pumps might be expected and was given to understand that Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver's office was doing everything within their power to expedite the supply of these pumps.

120. Q. What, in your opinion, was the primary cause of these sinkings and eventual damage to these Japanese fishing vessels?

A. In my opinion, sir, it was because a large majority of these vessels were moored on unsafe ground.

121. Q. Were there any other major causes, in your opinion?

A. Yes, sir.

122. Q. What were they?

A. Peculiar weather conditions prevailing during the first and second weeks in January. Lack of sufficiently large working parties with adequate motor pumping facilities. Also, that some of the vessels were in an unseaworthy condition on arrival. Insufficient care had been given to the safe mooring of these boats on their arrival from down river. The securing alongside the dyke without vertical stringer pieces permitted the inboard vessel to foul the horizontal stringers on the ebb and flow tides, with the result that this inboard vessel canted over and fouled the boat adjacent to it. As a number of the outside boats were on foul ground and in some cases submerged and grounded, they were, in most cases, not in a position to free themselves.

WITNESS: Sub-Lieutenant S.F. Ross, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, (Temporary) - CALLED:

123. Q. Did you at any time receive any direct and specific orders written or verbal, from the Naval Officer in Charge himself for the safe custody of these vessels?

A. Definitely no written orders were received. Any verbal orders I did receive were in the course of conversation I had with Naval Officer in Charge in his office about four days after my arrival.

124. Q. Having made representation of various sinkings to Lieutenant Commander Smith did you receive any instructions, written or verbal, direct from Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, to remedy that situation?

A. Yes, sir, verbal instructions.

125. Q. What were these verbal instructions which were given you to remedy the situation?

A. To remove vessels from the shoal water down to the deep water.

126. Q. Was this order capable of being fulfilled?

A. Yes, sir.

127. Q. Was there sufficient room for 200 or 300 of these vessels to be moved to deep water?

A. Yes, I think so, but only as a temporary measure as there were insufficient moorings.

128. Q. Were you provided with charts and tidal tables in order to familiarize yourself with the conditions?

A. Not at that time.

129. Q. Did you make representation to obtain them?

A. I obtained them from McLennan, McFeely & Prior Limited, of New Westminster. I Obtained 12 tide tables.

130. Q. Did you ask Naval Officer in Charge's office to supply you with them?

A. No, sir.

131. Q. Why did you order them on your own?

A. Well, sir, I sent down to the Post Office to find out where these could be obtained, and was informed that they could be obtained from this firm, free. That is why I did not make a request to Naval Officer in Charge for them. However, when I went to obtain them from this firm, this information about obtaining them free was erroneous, as one had to pay for them.

132. Q. Do you consider that Chief Motor Mechanic Carter carried out his work in a satisfactory manner?

A. Indeed I do, sir.

WITNESS WITHDREW

WITNESS: Lieutenant C.F. Draney, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, (Temporary) - CALLED:

133. Q. Are you Lieutenant C.F. Draney, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve (Temporary)?

A. Yes, sir.

Witness Cautioned

134. Q. When did you arrive at New Westminster with reference to the Japanese vessels moored at Annacis Island?

A. The morning of the 13th December, 1941, accompanied by Chief Motor Mechanic Carter and Motor Mechanic Smith.

135. Q. Will you please explain to the Board, briefly, the situation on your arrival?

A. Yes, sir. There were about 200 boats moored up on the inside of the dyke by Annacis Island on my arrival.

136. Q. Were all these boats moored up safely, in your opinion?

A. The lines were not particularly in good shape, which indicated that little attention had been given to their mooring.

137. Q. Were any of the vessels sunk?

A. No, sir.

138. Q. What portion of the dyke were they moored up alongside of?

A. At the lower end of the dyke in deep water.

139. Q. How long did you remain at New Westminster?

A. I left on Christmas Eve, 24th December, 1941, finally.

140. Q. Had any boats sunk prior to your departure?

A. Yes, sir.

141. Q. How many of them?

A. About six or seven.

142. Q. In your opinion, what was the cause of the sinkings?

A. When they were brought in a majority of them had been swamped on the way up and had not been bailed out and had gradually settled. Some of these I consider were unseaworthy on their arrival.

143. Q. Who was in charge when you left?

A. I turned over to Chief Skipper Gibson, sir.

144. Q. Did you receive any special instructions for the securing of these vessels from Naval Officer in Charge, in writing?

A. No, sir.

145. Q. Did you receive any specific instructions with regard to the mooring and safety of these vessels verbally or in writing?

A. No, sir.

WITNESS: Lieutenant C.F. Draney, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, (Temporary) - CALLED:

146. Q. Did you ask for any special instructions with regard to the mooring of these vessels or plan as to how they were going to be moored?

A. Yes; I raised the point with Lieutenant Commander Smith that in my opinion this could not be considered as a permanent mooring for this number of vessels as it was not a safe mooring.

147. Q. What reply did you receive with regard to this observation on your part?

A. That it was not intended to be a permanent mooring.

148. Q. Why did you consider that it was not safe?

A. Because there was not room for them owing to the shallows and the foul ground.

149. Q. Did Commander Borrie, the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, to your knowledge, visit Annacis Island during the period you were there?

A. Yes, sir.

150. Q. Did he issue any instructions to you during this visit?

A. I cannot remember anything specific.

151. Q. Did he appear to consider that the situation was satisfactory?

A. I could not say, sir, as he made no complaints to me as to the work we had been carrying out, except with regard to the safety of some men I had living in the boats as guards.

152. Q. Were you provided with adequate pumping arrangements during the period you were there?

A. No, sir.

153. Q. Did you make any request regarding this?

A. Yes, sir.

154. Q. To whom?

A. Lieutenant Commander Smith.

155. Q. Was this request complied with whilst you were there?

A. No, sir.

156. Q. What was your request?

A. For small portable power pumps.

157. Q. Did you receive any reasons as to why these pumps had not been provided?

A. I understand that Lieut. Commander Smith telephoned the Forestry Department to see if he could borrow pumps as there was some delay in purchasing the ones for ourselves. Whether they had actually tried to at that time or not I do not know.

WITNESS: Lieutenant C.F. Draney, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, (Temporary) - CALLED:

158. Q. Did you make any report with regard to the boats which had sunk?

A. Not a written one, sir.

159. Q. Did you make a verbal report?

A. Well, sir, Commander Borrie on his visits was aware of the situation and the sinkings.

160. Q. Did you receive any orders from Commander Borrie to prevent any further sinkings or damage?

A. No, sir, because the few boats that had sunk during the period I was there were those in an unseaworthy condition and were practically sunk on their arrival and were beached on their arrival at Annacis Island.

161. Q. Had there been any wholesale sinkings of the vessels alongside the dyke when you had left?

A. No, sir.

WITNESS WITHDREW

WITNESS: Lieutenant Commander J.M. Smith,Royal Canadian Navy (Temporary) - CALLED:

162. Q. Are you Lieutenant Commander J.M. Smith, Royal Canadian Navy (Temporary)?

A. Yes, sir.

Witness Cautioned

163. Q. What is your appointment?

A. Extended Defence Officer on the staff of the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, B.C.

164. Q. When did you take up that appointment?

A. On the 23rd May, 1940.

165. Q. Have you been there ever since?

A. Yes.

166. Q. Being on the staff of the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, were you familiar with Commanding Officer Pacific Coast's P.C.) 010-5-2, which was a Memorandum for the examination of all fishing vessels on this coast. It had previously been issued as a memorandum for the "Round Up of Japanese Fishing Craft."

THIS MEMORANDUM WAS PRODUCED AND PERUSED BY THE WITNESS

A. Yes, I have seen this Memorandum before.

WITNESS: Lieutenant Commander J.M. Smith, Royal Canadian Navy, (Temporary) CALLED:

167. Q. Did you discuss at any time with the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, as to how you were going to carry out your share of this operation?

A. No, sir. As laid down there it did not deal with how we were going to impound the vessels.

168. Q. When were you first informed as to the place of impounding the majority of these vessels?

A. By signals from Commanding Officer Pacific Coast to discover some place on the Fraser River, 10 miles up the river from Steveston.

169. Q. On receipt of this signal from the Commanding Officer Pacific Coast to Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, that suitable mooring grounds were to be found approximately 10 miles up the river from Steveston, did you receive any instructions to survey these stretches of the river from Naval Officer in Charge?

A. Yes, sir. I was instructed to go out to New Westminster and visit the various places in that vicinity and to report back if any suitable places were found.

170. Q. What did you do?

A. On these instructions I proceeded to New Westminster and contacted the Harbour Master, as I considered that he would be the most likely person to advise me of the suitability of various locations of the river. He advised me that the portion behind Annieville Dyke was considered suitable. A pilot was present at this meeting and a few other officials who concurred with the suggestion.

171. Q. What did you do then?

A. I reported back to Naval Officer in Charge that this area was considered suitable.

172. Q. Did you have any survey made of this area?

A. I had the plans from the Public Works Department. We went on that.

173. Q. From that plan did you consider that the suggestion made by the Harbour Master was acceptable?

A. Yes, sir.

174. Q. Did you allocate any special areas inside the Annieville Dyke that were more suitable than other areas for the mooring of this large number of vessels?

A. We thought the upper end was suitable for the smaller boats and the other end for the bigger vessels.

175. Q. Did you make any analysis and come to a mathematical conclusion as to whether that number of vessels expected could be safely accommodated, with regard to width, length, breadth and draught?

A. No, sir.

WITNESS: Lieutenant Commander J.M. Smith, Royal Canadian Navy (Temporary) CALLED:

176. Q. Did you make any inquiries as to how many vessels would arrive?

A. No, sir.

177. Q. How many did you anticipate would arrive?

A. We thought round about 900. We thought that the 500 already at Steveston would remain.

178. Q. Did you have doubts in your mind at this time as to the safety under varying weather conditions of this piece of mooring ground?

A. No, sir. I made my decision on the advice of the New Westminster people.

179. Q. Did you not question that advice?

A. No, sir.

180. Q. When did the first vessels arrive at Annacis Island for mooring?

A. Round about the 9th December, 1941.

181. Q. What arrangements were made for safely mooring these vessels?

A. We had the motor mechanics up there and also had a few of the ratings from H.M.C.S. "DISCOVERY" and the crews of the "TALAPUS" and "MOOLOCK".

182. Q. And what instructions or orders were given these personnel?

A. Well, sir, boats were coming in up to 100 in the evening and they did all they could at night and then would straighten them out in the morning.

183. Q. Whose idea was that?

A. Mine, sir.

184. Q. Was that done?

A. Yes, sir.

185. Q. Were you able to straighten out and correctly moor each daily batch of vessels that arrived to your satisfaction and safety before the next batch came up?

A. No, sir.

186. Q. Did you make any arrangements by signal, verbally or in writing that vessels were arriving more rapidly than you could cope with them and request that they be retarded?

A. No, sir.

187. Q. Why not?

A. Well, nothing, other than make a signal to send every available motor mechanic over.

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WITNESS: Lieutenant Commander J.M. Smith, Royal Canadian Navy (Temporary)
CALLED:

188. Q. If the speed at which the boats arrived was too great for your small securing party to cope with did you not consider it would be wise to hold the vessels further down the river until such times as you could moor those which you had up there in a safe manner?

A. We had quite a number of vessels at Steveston and I would rather have them up at Annacis Island. I thought they were safer there.

189. Q. Did you receive any report from Chief Motor Mechanic Carter that boats were getting sunk and that there was danger of more sinkings?

A. Yes, sir. I went every day and saw him and he made his report.

190. Q. When he made a report indicating that a great number of these boats were on foul ground what action did you take?

A. The boats were gradually shifted down from the foul ground.

191. Q. Is it correct that the reason these gill-netters were moored up by the dolphins by the dyke was that you understood this was to be a temporary mooring place?

A. Yes, sir.

192. Q. Did you realize that this was foul ground and became dry at low water when they were first moored over it?

A. No, sir.

193. Q. Did you have access to the chart of this area?

A. Yes, sir.

194. Q. Did you with that chart work out tidal range at that area?

A. No, sir.

195. Q. Had you done so, would you not have found that the foul ground became dry at low water?

A. Comparison between the chart and the tide tables was not made by me.

196. Q. When was the first sinking alongside the dyke reported to you; that is, the sinking of an unseaworthy vessel?

A. On Friday, 12th December, 1941.

197. Q. Did you report this sinking to Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver?

A. Yes, I did, verbally.

198. Q. Did he give you any instructions at that time of a preventative nature to avoid a recurrence of these sinkings?

A. No, sir, although we discussed the situation and decided to go ahead lifting as many of the vessels as we could and ask for more motor mechanics to assist, which was the reason for that first signal asking for motor mechanics to be sent.

WITNESS: Lieutenant Commander J.M. Smith, Royal Canadian Navy (Temporary)
CALLED:

199. Q. What was your reason for the second signal asking that every available motor mechanic be sent?

A. This was for the specific purpose during the cold weather of draining the motors of the vessels that were afloat and not for the sinkings, as the Board, I believe, has been given to understand.

200. Q. Do you know the reason for the sinking of this first vessel alongside the dyke on the 12th December, 1941?

A. No. It was not explained to me.

201. Q. Did you not enquire?

A. No, I did not.

202. Q. After two or three of these vessels that were in the trots moored alongside the dyke had sunk, was an investigation held as to the reason?

A. No, sir.

203. Q. Was any investigation made?

A. Just from the Motor Mechanic.

204. Q. What was the cause?

A. Bad leaks.

205. Q. Could these leaks, therefore, have not been overcome by pumping?

A. Yes.

206. Q. Were they pumped or bailed?

A. They were bailed.

207. Q. Was it sufficient to overcome the inflow of water?

A. In the first place we had not the men.

208. Q. When did you realize that you did not have sufficient men?

A. About the 10th January, 1942.

209. Q. How many sinkings had taken place before the 10th January?

A. About 30, I believe.

210. Q. The Board can assume, therefore, that it took you some 30 sinkings to realize that you had insufficient personnel to cope with the bailing?

A. Yes.

211. Q. Did you make any signals or demands for more personnel to assist in this bailing work?

A. No, as we hoped that the 60 that arrived from Naden would be satisfactory.

WITNESS: Lieutenant Commander J.M. Smith, Royal Canadian Navy (Temporary)
CALLED:

212. Q. As these Naden personnel arrived on December 31st, 1941, you apparently took until approximately 10th January, 1942, to decide whether this number of ratings was adequate for the hand bailing of these vessels?

A. Yes.

213. Q. What pumping facilities had you for keeping these vessels pumped dry?

A. In the first instance we had small hand pumps for bailing and then we got 5 motor pumps. Two of these were supplied on the 9th January, 1942.

214. Q. Did you know why motor pumps had not been purchased and supplied at an earlier date?

A. The question did not crop up until about the beginning of January.

215. Q. Is the Board to understand by that remark that you did not consider there was any need for pumps until then?

A. We were optimistic in our outlook up until that time, and considered that we could cope with it.

216. Q. Are you aware of the contents of the Care and Maintenance Orders for these vessels as issued by Commanding Officer Pacific Coast's P.C.010-5-2 of 22nd December, 1941, with special reference to paragraph (3)?

A. Yes, I have read those orders.

217. Q. As the majority of the sinkings occurred on the foul ground where the gill-netters were moored abreast of the dolphins did it not occur to you during the first week of January that this was a dangerous mooring ground owing to the initial wrong estimation as to depth of water over this patch?

A. Yes, sir.

218. Q. Did you report that observation to Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver?

A. Every time I came back from New Westminster, I had a general discussion with him on the situation.

219. Q. Did Naval Officer in Charge give any specific instructions or orders to you to overcome this adverse situation of mooring vessels over this foul ground?

A. No, sir.

220. Q. Did you not point out to Naval Officer in Charge that this was the danger spot of the whole area and that some immediate steps should be taken?

A. During a discussion I pointed out that the vessels would have to be moved as soon as possible, in order to get them to deep water.

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WITNESS: Lieutenant Commander J.M. Smith, Royal Canadian Navy (Temporary) CALLED:

221. Q. When did you first make that observation to Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver?

A. About the 15th January, 1942.

222. Q. Did he give you any orders?

A. He was quite satisfied that they should be moved to deep water.

223. Q. Did he say when they should be moved?

A. No, sir.

224. Q. Did you feel that he expected you to take action?

A. I felt that I was responsible.

225. Q. When did you start the wholesale shifting of the boats?

A. About the 16th or 17th January, 1942.

226. Q. When was this operation completed?

A. It was practically complete on the 24th. We shifted them to the lower end of the dyke.

227. Q. What do you consider the probable cause of the great number of sinkings and damage to these vessels that were sent to this area for safe mooring?

A. My firm belief is that most of the boats that have sunk are old boats and not in good condition.

228. Q. Do you mean to infer, by that remark, that these vessels would have sunk in any event, had they been in a deep water mooring and given the normal attention of pumping and bilges?

A. They would not sink if there was a man in each boat looking after them.

229. Q. Do you not, in any way, blame the mooring ground, with special reference to that in the centre of the dyke, which was foul?

A. That might be the case with regard to a larger boat overlapping a smaller one and preventing it rising.

230. Q. Did not a number of boats moored alongside the dyke become fouled under the stringer pieces?

A. There were a few.

231. Q. And what effect did that have on the other boats in their trot?

A. They sank right along the dyke; that was mainly up at the top in the shallow water. One sank further down the trot through getting under the cribbing of the stringers.

232. Q. Did you take any action to overcome this hazard?

A. No, sir.

WITNESS: Lieutenant Commander J.M. Smith, Royal Canadian Navy (Temporary)
CALLED:

233. Q. Not at a later date?

A. Precautions have been taken now.

234. Q. What action has been taken now?

A. Vertical stringers have been placed to act as a buffer.

235. Q. Did the Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, give you any instructions in writing?

A. No, sir.

236. Q. Did he appear at any time worried about the state of affairs?

A. Yes, sir.

237. Q. How often did he visit the vessels at Annacis Island with you?

A. He went three times, from the 7th December to 26th January, the latter time being with Commanding Officer Pacific Coast.

238. Q. Observing that you stated you did not consider that pumps were necessary until the first of January, when you submitted a demand, did not Chief Motor Mechanic Carter submit a request to you for pumps prior to that date?

A. I cannot remember. However, I do know that the Chief Motor Mechanic was very anxious, and certainly conscientious in his work.

239. Q. If you considered that the number of vessels sent to Annacis Island greater than you could safely moor, did you make representations through Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, to higher authority that the 500 vessels held out at Steveston remain there until the situation was in hand at Annacis Island?

A. No, sir.

240. Q. Why did you not make such representation?

A. Well, my understanding of the situation was that the higher authority wished all of these vessels to be congregated at a central assembly point, and that Annacis Island was that point.

241. Q. Where did you obtain this impression of policy?

A. Whilst discussing the situation with Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, during which time he carried on telephonic conversations with regard to the situation, with Commanding Officer Pacific Coast.

WITNESS WITHDREW

WITNESS: Commander G. Borrie, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve (Temporary) - CALLED:

242. Q. Are you Commander G. Borrie, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve, (Temporary), and Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, B.C.?

A. I am.

Witness Cautioned

243. Q. This Board is attending the circumstances attending the sinking of, and damage to, Japanese fishing vessels held in protective custody at Annacis Island, and to ascertain what measures have been taken for the safe custody of these vessels and to remedy and report the sinking and damage to various of these vessels. Will you please tell the Board who was responsible for the selection of the mooring ground in the vicinity of Annacis Island for these vessels?

A. I received instructions by telephone and signal to select a suitable mooring ground for impounded Japanese fishing vessels about 10 miles up river from Steveston.

244. Q. What action did you take to select a suitable mooring ground in accordance with these instructions and what did you report?

A. The original area selected was not approved as it was considered too close to the Pattullo Bridge and too public. Therefore, we selected the area to the west of Annieville Dyke in the vicinity of Annacis Island.

245. Q. On whose recommendation, if any, did you make this selection

A. On the recommendation of Lieutenant Commander Smith, who had been in consultation with the Harbour Master at New Westminster, and who gave him a Public Works Department plan of this area dated New Westminster, 10th November, 1941. I understand this plan has been scrutinized by the members of the Board.

246. Q. Notwithstanding these recommendations, however, you were actually responsible for the selection of a safe anchorage?

A. Yes.

247. Q. Did you inspect the chart of this area, in conjunction with the current tide tables?

A. I inspected the chart. I consulted the tide tables later.

248. Q. Did you select any certain areas that were more suitable than others for mooring this number of craft?

A. I relied upon the examination carried out by Lieutenant Commander Smith and as he reported that it was a suitable mooring, I accepted that fact.

249. Q. Having selected the area for mooring these vessels, did you issue any written instructions as to how the vessels were to be moored in this area?

A. I did not issue any written instructions.

.....28

WITNESS: Commander G. Borrie, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve (Temporary) - CALLED:

250. Q. Did you issue any verbal instructions?

A. I turned the matter over to Lieutenant Commander Smith, giving him verbal orders to take charge of the mooring of the vessels and to moor them in safe ground.

251. Q. Did you indicate any dangers he was to avoid in mooring these vessels?

A. No. I considered that Lieutenant Commander Smith was quite capable of carrying out the duties which were given to him.

252. Q. How many vessels did you estimate might have to be moored in this area?

A. About 700 or 800, roughly.

253. Q. Did you work out draught, length and beam for 700 or 800 vessels and give Lieutenant Commander Smith areas where these could be moored in safe water?

A. No. As I had it in my mind that the vessels would shortly be disposed of, and felt that this mooring was more or less of a temporary duration.

254. Q. However temporary the mooring of these vessels you thought might be, however, as the period was over 12 hours you would have to take into consideration the rise and fall of the tide. Is that not so?

A. Yes, it is.

255. Q. Previous witnesses have informed this Board that approximately 200 to 300 of the vessels, mostly of the smaller type, were moored alongside the dyke in the vicinity of the dolphins and over the foul ground abreast the dyke immediately opposite Shoal Point off Annacis Island. Were you aware that Lieutenant Commander Smith had permitted such a large number of vessels to be moored on foul ground?

A. Yes, I had visited the place.

256. Q. What was the state of the tide on that visit?

A. It was nearly high tide, as no flats were visible on the first occasion.

257. Q. The Board understands that a small number of vessels arrived from Steveston in a semi-waterlogged condition and to avoid these sinking they were beached on Annacis Island. However, later on, a number of vessels moored to the dyke sank. When did you first get information that some of these had sunk?

A. On the 12th December, 1941. Lieutenant Commander Smith reported all occurrences to me daily.

258. Q. Did you pass this report on to higher authority?

A. No, sir.

WITNESS: Commander G. Borrie, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve (Temporary) - CALLED:

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259. Q. What was your reason for not passing on this information to higher authority?

A. No reason, except that I thought we could save the situation by avoiding any recurrence by greater care in pumping parties.

260. Q. Did you have sufficient personnel to carry out these pumping operations?

A. No.

261. Q. When did you decide in your mind that you had insufficient pumping facilities, either manual or mechanical?

A. Well, my signal timed 2018z/24th December, 1941, requested any available motor mechanics be sent to carry out work on the vessels at Annacis Island.

262. Q. Lieutenant Commander Smith gave the Board to understand that these motor mechanics were only required for the care and maintenance of the machinery of the boats and not to carry out the manual labour of pumping the boats. Is this correct?

A. The wording of the signal would indicate that, but the actual idea in my mind was that they might be able to devise some mechanical pumping arrangements.

263. Q. Did you not consider that Ordinary Seamen ratings would be suitable for bailing until such a time as some mechanical pumping arrangements had been made?

A. Yes, but the fact remains that one had difficulty getting any seamen at all.

264. Q. Is there any letter or signal from you on record asking for any further seamen ratings?

A. No, there is not. I would like the Board to understand that the ratings that were sent were inefficient in that they needed supervision owing to their lack of experience. However, they did try to carry out instructions to the best of their limited knowledge of things pertaining to boats.

265. Q. Did you report by signal or in writing the inefficiency of the young, untrained seamen sent you?

A. No, sir. It was presumed that this was known by the authorities who sent them.

266. Q. Would not an increase in man power been of slight compensation for the lack of experience?

A. Yes, it would.

267. Q. Was this reported to higher authority?

A. No, sir.

WITNESS: Commander G. Borrie, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve (Temporary) - CALLED:

268. Q. From the evidence of previous witnesses, it would appear that the following are the chief causes to account for the sinkings and damage to these Japanese vessels impounded at Annacis Island:
(a) Poor choice of mooring ground insufficiently surveyed by the officer who selected this mooring ground;
(b) Securing boats alongside the dyke wall without firstly erecting vertical stringers to prevent vessels fouling with the rise and fall of the tide on the horizontal dyke stringers;
(c) Mooring approximately 200 or 300 of the vessels which were of the smaller type over a foul ground area adjacent to the dolphins at the centre of Annieville Dyke;
(d) Insufficient experienced personnel with insufficient pumping facilities to deal with the vast number of boats moored in this area.
Do you agree that these are the main causes?

A. Yes, I do.

269. Q. Which of these causes do you consider the prime cause?

A. I think the first one was the primary cause. However, I was instructed to obtain a mooring 10 miles up from Steveston and this was the best possible in my opinion.

270. Q. You stated earlier in your evidence that you anticipated that only 700 to 900 vessels would be arriving for mooring?

A. Yes, sir.

271. Q. What was the total number that had to be moored, however?

A. As far as I remember it was 950.

272. Q. Can you tell the Board why a greater number of vessels arrived than you originally estimated?

A. My original estimates were based on local knowledge.

273. Q. Did it ever occur to you that those which were hauled up at Steveston might remain there?

A. It not only occurred to me, but I supposed that they would

274. Q. Did you represent to higher authority or recommend to higher authority that these 500 odd vessels be left hauled up at Steveston as the situation at Annacis Island was not all that could be desired?

A. I brought this question up in the nature of a suggestion in telephonic conversation with the Commanding Officer, H.M.C.S. "GIVENCHY". Not to higher authority.

275. Q. What orders or instructions did you give for the safe custody of the fleet after you became slightly alarmed at the number of sinkings?

A. I did not give any orders in writing. My orders were all verbal to Lieutenant Commander Smith. In conversation with him I impressed upon him the necessity for doing what he could to obviate any further damage. In fairness to Lieut. Commander Smith I must state that he repeatedly brought to my attention the small number of men at his disposal

WITNESS: Commander G. Borrie, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve (Temporary) - CALLED:

276. Q. Did you make any further demands for more men?

A. No, I did not.

277. Q. What steps did you take to represent to higher authority, that is Commanding Officer Pacific Coast, these sinkings and damage?

A. The first written report was contained in my first reasons in writing called for by Commanding Officer Pacific Coast, my 15/37 dated 3rd February, 1942.

278. Q. This, then, was the first information received from you by Commanding Officer Pacific Coast of the unsatisfactory situation at this anchorage?

A. Yes, sir.

279. Q. Did you in any of your telephone conversation with Commanding Officer Pacific Coast prior to your written report inform him that a number of vessels had sunk?

A. I cannot remember that.

280. Q. Did you take any other steps to remedy the damage already caused other than verbal instructions to Lieutenant Commander Smith to use everything within his power to keep the situation in hand?

A. Yes; my signal 0115z/8th January, to Commanding Officer Pacific Coast requested authority to immediately purchase necessary pumps in view of the difficulty in keeping vessels pumped out with hand facilities. This signal was repeated to Commanding Officer, H.M.C.S. "GIVENCHY".

281. Q. Observing that the care and maintenance instructions issued by Commanding Officer Pacific Coast on the 22nd December, 1941, instructed you to purchase or obtain power pumps why were these not requested or demanded prior to the 8th January?

A. My Chief E.R.A. on my instructions was making inquiries during this period for a suitable type.

282. Q. Can you state the dates on which you visited Annacis Island mooring area prior to The Commanding Officer, H.M.C.S."GIVENCHY" visit on the 23rd January?

A. As far as I remember, I visited twice prior to my final visit with the Commanding Officer Pacific Coast, these visits being approximately the 9th and 16th December. However, several other visits were made to inspect the accommodation of the men and consult with the Officer in Charge of the guard and working party.

283. Q. The Board would like to ask your opinion of the efficiency of Chief Motor Mechanic Carter in carrying out his duties as the senior E.R. rating?

A. Excellent. I consider that he worked conscientiously and much harder than the average Chief Motor Mechanic would have done.

WITNESS: Commander G. Borrie, Royal Canadian Naval Reserve (Temporary) CALLED:

284. Q. Is there anything else you would like to say, or to have placed on record, with regard to these sinkings and the damage done to these Japanese fishing vessels?

A. I would like to make the following statement. Although my evidence might indicate I was not making frequent visits to the mooring area, having other duties to perform, I felt, and still do, that I had complete confidence in the decisions made by Lieutenant Commander Smith, who was in frequent consultations with me and all decisions made by him had and still do have my approval.

WITNESS WITHDREW

CERTIFIED TO BE A CORRECT TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE AS HEARD AT ABOVE INQUIRY.

George L. Anders

George L. Anders, Leading Writer, R.C.N.
O.N. 40920

B.R. Spencer

(B.R. Spencer)
A/Commander, (E)
Royal Canadian Navy.

J. McCulloch

(J. McCulloch)
Acting Commander,
Royal Canadian Navy (Temp.)

W.B.L. Holms

(W.B.L. Holms)
Acting Captain,
Royal Canadian Navy.

BOARD OF INQUIRY HELD ON SHORE IN THE NAVAL BASE AT VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, AT 0900, ON FRIDAY, 6TH MARCH, 1942, TO HOLD A FULL AND CAREFUL INVESTIGATION INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDING THE SINKING OF AND DAMAGE TO, JAPANESE FISHING VESSELS SEIZED AND IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY AT ANNACIS ISLAND AND TO ASCERTAIN WHAT MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY THE NAVAL OFFICER IN CHARGE, VANCOUVER (A) FOR THE SAFE CUSTODY OF THESE VESSELS (B) THE REMEDY AND REPORTED SINKING AND DAMAGE TO VESSELS.

FINDING OF THE BOARD

The following is the Finding of the Board of Inquiry ordered by the Commanding Officer Pacific Coast's Memorandum dated 2nd March, 1942, to hold a full and careful investigation into the circumstances attending:-

> "The sinking of and damage to Japanese Fishing Vessels seized and in protective custody at Annacis Island, and to ascertain what measures have been taken by the Naval Officer-in-Charge, Vancouver -
>
> (a) For the safe custody of these vessels
> (b) To remedy and report sinking and damage to vessels

The Board, after due consideration of all the evidence given by the various witnesses, finds that:-

(1) The principal cause of the majority of the sinkings and damage to the Japanese vessels seized was due to the fact that boats arrived in greater numbers than Naval Officer-in-Charge, Vancouver, was capable of having moored in a safe and seamanlike manner; yet he made no representation to reduce the numbers arriving, or to increase the Naval personnel carrying out the operation of mooring.

(2) The Naval Officer-in-Charge, Vancouver, failed to appreciate the magnitude of the operation for which he was responsible, in that:-

(a) He delegated the selection of this mooring ground to Lieutenant Cdr. Smith;
(b) He did not cause the area to be surveyed for the purpose required of it;

(c) He delegated the responsibility of so mooring the boats on their arrival to Lieutenant Commander Smith without firstly providing Lieutenant Commander Smith with full instructions and adequate personnel to carry out this work.

(3) The Naval Officer-in-Charge, Vancouver, having received verbal reports of sinkings and damage failed to make a thorough personal survey of the situation, or to issue necessary instructions to better the situation, and he failed to keep his higher authority informed of the situation, in that:-

(i) Though the situation deteriorated rapidly after January 7th or 8th, chiefly due to unexpected weather conditions, the extent of the damage sustained would have been much less had more ratings and better pumping facilities been available;

(ii) Chief Motor Mechanic Carter on his own initiative asked for and obtained assistance from the Public Works Department;

(iii) No report was made by Naval Officer in Charge, Vancouver, to Commanding Officer Pacific Coast until 3rd of February, 1942, when called for by Commanding Officer Pacific Coast.

B.R. Spencer
(B.R. Spencer)
A/Commander, (E)
Royal Canadian Navy.

J. McCulloch
(J. McCulloch)
Acting Commander,
Royal Canadian Navy (Temp.)

W.B.L. Holms
(W.B.L. Holms)
Acting Captain,
Royal Canadian Navy.

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CONFIDENTIAL

R.C.N. Barracks,
Esquimalt, B.C.
11th March,

Sir:

I have the honour to submit that in accordance with your Memorandum dated 2nd March, 1942, a Board of Inquiry was convened on shore in the Naval Base at Vancouver, B.C., at 0900, on Friday, 6th March, 1942, to hold a full and careful investigation into the circumstances attending the sinking of and damage to Japanese fishing vessels held in protective custody at Annacis Island, B.C.

2. The Minutes and Finding of the Board, together with the original report and your Memorandum dated 2nd March, 1942, are submitted herewith in accordance with paragraph 6 of the above mentioned Memorandum.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(W.B. Holms)
A/Captain, R.C.N.
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD.

The Commanding Officer,
Pacific Coast,
H.M.C. Dockyard,
ESQUIMALT, B.C.

Encs.

COPY

N.S. 1030-6-14
F.D. 3

4th June, 1942.

Dear Sir:

My Minister has referred to me your letter of the 26th May, 1942, with reference to the custody of Japanese fishing vessels seized on the West Coast.

Pursuant to your request, the Naval Service has agreed to maintain the existing guard until the 30th June, 1942.

As it is proposed to remove the Naval guard on the 1st July, 1942, confirmation is requested that relief from this duty will be provided on that date, to permit the return of the Naval ratings involved to other urgent commitments.

Yours very truly,

(Sgd.) W.G. Mills

DEPUTY MINISTER.

The Deputy Minister of Justice,
O T T A W A.

1030-6-14 Docket 3

COPY

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE
Naval Service

Ottawa, Canada.

11th June, 1942.

SECRET

MEMORANDUM:

Enclosed is copy of a letter addressed to the Deputy Minister of Justice dated 4th June which is forwarded for information.

It is not proposed to remove the guards from the Japanese fishing vessels until they are actually relieved by guards to be furnished by the Department of Justice and no action to remove these men should be taken until definite steps are taken by the Department of Justice to relieve Naval personnel so serving.

BY ORDER.

(Sgd.) Joseph Jeffery,
for SECRETARY, NAVAL BOARD.

H.M.C.S. "NADEN"
034
JUN 22 1942
579
A/ CAPTAIN, R.C.N.
ESQUIMALT, B. C.

Commanding Officer Pacific Coast,
H.M.C. Dockyard,
Esquimalt, B.C.

SECRET P.C. 010-5-2 - II -

The Commanding Officer, H.M.C.S. "GIVENCHY"
(Copies to: The Commanding Officer, H.M.C.S. "NADEN"
The Officer-in-Charge, New Westminster, B.C.
The Naval Officer-in-Charge, Vancouver, B.C.)

Forwarded for information.

H.M.C. Dockyard,
Esquimalt, B.C.,
20th June, 1942.

S:cb

(Sgd.) C. M. CREE
COMMODORE, R.C.N.,
Commanding Officer
Pacific Coast.