

SCORED CREW OF THE BON VOYAGE

Full Text of Verdict of the Coroner's Jury.

NO EFFORT TO SAVE THE WOMEN

BENJAMIN ALTMAN WILL SUE FOR HEAVY DAMAGES.

List of Some of the Testimony Given By Passengers—Damaging to the Company.

The full text of the findings of the coroner's jury in the case of the loss of life as a result of the burning of the steamer Bon Voyage, May 10, near Houghton, was as follows:

"We, the jury, find that Leah Sharp came to her death by drowning in Lake Superior while a passenger on the burned steamer Bon Voyage.

"The jury further finds that death was due to a criminal lack of order and discipline, necessary in the event of danger, on the part of the officers and crew of said steamer.

"The jury further finds that no effort was made by the officers or crew to save the five women and children passengers.

"The jury also finds that no effort was made by the officers or crew at the proper time to launch the life boats and that the life preservers were worthless and not kept ready for use in event of emergency."

According to the Houghton Mining Gazette, because of the similarity of the cases, no inquests will be held over the other victims of the fire, and the same causes will be assigned for the loss of the other members of the Altman family.

An Associated Press dispatch from Houghton to The News Tribune last evening says that the body of Mrs. Adele Altman, the fourth and last victim of the disaster, was found yesterday near the Calumet & Hecla waterworks, 12 miles north of the wreck. It is further stated that Benjamin Altman will sue the owners of the Bon Voyage for heavy damages.

The reading public is probably familiar with the fact that none of the members of the crew of the burned steamer was called upon to testify in the coroner's inquest. The story of the crew has been told in The News Tribune quite fully and by several of the members. They have agreed upon most essential points.

The Houghton Mining Gazette, in its summary of the coroner's inquest, says:

It was proved to the satisfaction of the jury that the Bon Voyage was not properly equipped to care for its passenger list in case of fire, and that the captain and his crew did not attempt to launch the lifeboats until it was entirely too late. And this in addition to the fact that the crew was ignorant of the condition of the boats—whether it was possible to launch them or not.

Several witnesses were put upon the stand, and only one of them—M. Clos—gave testimony at all favorable to the company, and when the lawyers had finished with him his evidence was "shot full of holes." He made certain statements indicating that Captain Foley acted with unusual promptness in providing for the safety of his passengers, and then other witnesses testified that he had made a claim just about to the opposite of the street.

Some really sensational evidence was brought in when it was shown—and Clos was finally forced to acknowledge—that he was driven over from Houghton to the justice office on Monday, when the inquest was adjourned, by Captain Foley, and requested not to talk too much, with the assurance that, if he did the proper thing, he would be taken care of.

W. G. Rice, of the firm of Gray, Haire & Rice, was present, and conducted the examination of witnesses on behalf of Altman, and to Mr. Rice's thoroughness in the examinations and cross-examinations is due the clearness with which the story was brought out and established to the satisfaction of the jury.

Bessie Altman, the 16-year-old daughter, who was rescued by the tug Mariel, told an especially pathetic story. She testified that the life preserver which was given her had absolutely nothing which which to fasten it upon herself, and that, when she requested another, she was told that there was no time for changing—to put it on and make the best of it. When finally she was in the water, she lost the preserver, and only managed to keep from sinking by hanging to a fender which had been loosened by the fire. She saw her mother, grandmother and two sisters go down, and, on the whole, the story she told was one to excite general sympathy.

Sam Altman, the husband and father, testified that he was on the Bon Voyage on April 26 and that the steamer was on fire at that time. The fire, he said, caught in a similar manner as the one that destroyed the steamer. It was, however, put out by the crew. This is in contradiction to the testimony brought out at the investigation by the vessel inspectors, when the captain and members of the crew testified that the steamer had never before been on fire.

The testimony of Fain, the traveling man who was rescued by the Mariel, was quite along the same line. The life preserver he received was as worthless

as the one the Altman girl was given and he fastened it on with his necktie; no attempt was made by the captain or crew to save the lives of the women passengers and absolutely no move was made to launch the boats until the fire had so spread as to make it impossible.

Fain stated that he gave the alarm of fire and that the boat was then fully two miles from shore. There was plenty of time to have launched the boats and to have gotten all the passengers off safely, but no such attempt was made until it was found that the fire could not be drowned out. The captain ordered the use of the hose, but nothing further was done until it was entirely too late.

Such in substance was Fain's testimony and it was not shaken in the least throughout. As may be seen, it was damaging to the boat company and the captain and there is little doubt that it had much weight with the jury.

The jury was composed of six of Hancock's representative business men and throughout the inquest they manifested a desire to get at the bottom of the case. The jurymen were Wayne Pettit, Ed. Hocking, A. J. Scott, Joseph MaHerbe, Adolph Ruhl and John Erickson.