

M/S "BELPAMELA"

TRANSLATED ABSTRACT

from

TRANSCRIPT OF MARITIME DECLARATION

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PAGE 1, LINE 8 FROM BOTTOM:-

" Appeared 2nd Officer Georg Bengson, born 2/9-1909 at Moscow, Norwegian
" citizen since 1943, address: Lillesand, and explained that all log books
" had been lost wherefore he as the oldest surviving Deck Officer had drawn up
a short written statement in lieu of the regulation log abstract. The written
statement was read and ran as follows:

" Arrival New York 3/12. Commenced loading locomotives for Cher-
bourg. Used stevedores as before. Lashings and chockings installed by the
same people as before under the supervision of 1st and 2nd Officer. All
lashings and chockings (shorings) were checked, everything evidently in
order. Certificate issued.

Immediately after the arrival at New York boat maneuver with
both port lifeboats, roll-call at starboard lifeboat. All in order.

Departure 4/5-47. Passed lightship at 0120 4/6.

From 4/6 to 4/10 variable weather and wind. Lashings and chock-
ings inspected every watch.

4/10-47. Increasing wind and sea. Due to violent sea and wind
the vessel was headed against the weather with reduced speed in the engine.
Lashings and chockings in the holds and on deck inspected and tightened.

1200 hours 4/10-47. Wind SW velocity 10. Sea 8. Severe rolling
and shipping of water. Barom. 749 mm. Full storm.

1200 - 1600. Riding the weather with slow speed in the engine.
Lashings and chockings in the holds and on deck inspected and tightened.



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Everything found to be in order. At 1600 Wind SW, velocity 12, Sea 10. Full hurricane force. Vessel shipping water. Barom. 746 mm.

At 1630 the vessel acquired a constant list to port, approx. 10 to 15 degrees. On inspection of the cargo all lashings on the aftermost section in the after hold proved to have snapped. All the four locomotives had stowed together. Giving a clearance of 6 - 8 ft. Normally appr. 2 ft.

All hands were immediately put to work rigging up lashings and shorings on starboard side. During this work it proved that two of the shorings on port side, middle section, were not in order. Two new shorings were therefore installed. Much water and oil in port bilge, rendering this work difficult, the engine room was immediately ordered to pump out the bilges and to fill up starboard #4 tank. Continued with shorings and lashings aftermost section, starboard side.

At approx. 2100 finished with this work.

About to continue with inspection of lashings and shorings on the remaining cargo when four lashings on the middle section in the after hold snapped. The four locomotives in the middle section rolled with violent force against port side. Derailed and continued rolling back and forth. Further work in the hold was now considered hopeless. The Master and the 1st Officer were briefed on the situation. The vessel's list to port increased. The Master now gave orders to ready all lifeboats and to stand by same.

Both lifeboats aft were made ready. Due to the heavy list to port and severe rolling the lifeboats could not be released from the chocks.

Approx. 0100 on the 4/11 Stop in the engine. The vessel heeled over to port more and more.

At 0200 orders were given to go in the lifeboats. Port lifeboat No. 2 was released in the chocks, it swung violently over due to the great list. At this time the water was flush with the boat deck. The boat was launched intact, but was forced back against the ship's side, due to the sea and the undertow. The boat was totally damaged. Motorman A. Eiden was wounded in the boat and pantry boy Nygaard was wounded on the raft. An attempt was made to launch port lifeboat No. 1, but in vain due to the heavy list and because it was heavily damaged in the bottom by the spare propeller which tore its lashings and went overboard, and all hands went to the life rafts lying on the awning bars on starboard side.

after end of the boat deck. The rafts were launched safely and the crew left the ship. At that time the vessel had a 90 degree list. The vessel capsized and sank within 4 minutes. This happened at 0230 hours (ship's time). Position approx. N 40 degrees W 53 degrees 30 min.

It was not possible to transmit any S.O.S. due to the radio antenna having been blown away 4/10 at 1545. An attempt was made to rig up a new antenna, but this failed due to the weather. None of the ship's papers were saved. ** (Unquote - end of line 6, Page 4).

L. MOLVIG
Norwegian Underwriters' Agency
80 Broad Street, New York

4257



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