

MINUTE SHEET.

Reference

1441/1/39
24

I took the opportunity of a conversation with Mr. Hickerson this afternoon to ask him how the matter of the "City of Flint" stood. He told me that the ship was now at Murmansk and that the American crew were all on board and safe and sound. The Russian authorities were now examining the cargo though exactly why they were doing so was not clear to the S. D.

Mr. Hickerson did not volunteer any information about the action which the S. D. had taken or were contemplating taking vis-a-vis the Russian or the German Governments in the matter though he expressed his fairly confident opinion that he thought that in the end the Russians would agree to release the vessel.

From the way in which Mr. Hickerson spoke it seemed clear that the S. D. were taking the line - followed in the "Appam" case - that prizes could not be admitted into neutral ports for longer than 24 hours unless they were not seaworthy. I said to him that I understood that there was another side to the legal case and that under one of the Hague Conventions it had been laid down that prizes could be lodged in neutral ports pending a decision of the prize court of the captor. Mr. Hickerson professed never to have heard of this, which seemed rather odd.

The B.L.I. will no doubt have reported on the newspaper reactions to the seizure of the "City of Flint" and unless and until we can get a more definite indication of the views of the S. D. in the matter there is not much that we can usefully say to the F. O. from here.

26th October 1939

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INDEX

Mr. [unclear] - It seems all the odder as Hickerson is on the advisory committee of the Harvard Research in Int'l Law which in Art 29 discusses at length the whole question & states both views. J.F. 2710.

W.E.
The ship has
now been
released - but
no further news
from
L 28/10