

large New York, Porto Rico and St. Thomas mail, also a large cargo and the following passengers:

From Porto Rico: Wilhelmina Thomas, Clothilda Marcus, Ovan Larke, Charles B. Colmore.

From St. Thomas: Mr. Earnest Van Beverhoudt, and 2 children, Mr. Joseph Kitnurse, Mrs. Agatha Bennett, Mrs. Diana Isaac, Miss Lucreasia Petersen, Mr. Rothchild Francis.

She sailed yesterday with about 25 passengers.

St. Thomas News.

We understand that on Monday morning the 2nd inst., in the District Court here, and before Acting Judge Chr. H. Payne, Alphonse P. Camisuli, representing the Sugar Producing Co. Inc., of New York, brought suit for \$400,000 demurrage against the British schooner Edgewood, Capt. Von Richter, now lying in port. *St. Thomas Mail Notes, Aug. 4th.*

The St. Thomas Food Commission has been advised by the West India Sugar Factory of St. Croix, that they are unable to make further delivery of sugar under contract dated 16th March 1920, but that they can supply sugar at \$40.80 per bag of 250 lbs. net delivered on wharf at Fredericksted.

The St. Thomas Food Commission has addressed the Governor with a view to obtaining legal assistance in bringing suit to effect delivery of 180 tons remaining undelivered under the contract at 11½ cents per lb.

It will be remembered that 120 tons were delivered in March.

For the information of the public the contract is quoted in full.

Christiansted, St. Croix Virgin Islands
March 16, 1920.

It is hereby agreed between the St. Thomas Food Commission, through Despatching Secretary, and the West Indian "Bethlehem Sugar Factory, that the latter furnish said Food Commission with sugar up to 300 tons f. o. b. Fredericksted or Christiansted at a price not to exceed 11.5 per pound.

It is further agreed that the St. Thomas Food Commission will be given any financial benefit which may result in the decline of the market of sugar. And it is further agreed that should the market price of sugar advance, the price of 11.5 per pound will still obtain.

On behalf of the West Indian Sugar Factory.

P. ADAMSEN.
Director.

FRED. B. COLBY,
Despatching Secretary.

--Ibid.

A very acute crisis in the life of the community was reached yesterday morning, when a portion of the supply of sugar

contracted for with the West Indian Sugar Factory of St. Croix, and brought over from time to time in Government vessels, and retailed at 14 cents per pound, gave out, and the people—in particular, the poor—found themselves suddenly without this very much-used commodity.

It was, indeed, pitiable to see the people rushing from shop to shop in search of this much-needed article, and to hear their cries of distress upon learning that there was none to be had.

The gravity of the situation will be better understood when it is taken into consideration that this commodity like bread, forms one of the chief mainstays in the life of the poor people, many of whom are oft-times from dire necessity compelled to make a meal—if such a term can be applied—of sweetened bush-tea, and bread. What helps to aggravate the situation is the knowledge appertaining to the direct cause of this sugar famine, so suddenly thrust upon us.

It is true, that such a calamity had been long foreseen; but steps to prevent the evil had been undertaken by the Food Commission in the interest of the people by the contracting with the above mentioned sugar concern, for the purchase and delivery of 300 tons of sugar, at the stipulated price of 11½ cents per pound. Of this amount contracted for, but 120 tons have been delivered. Within the present week, on Wednesday, presumably, the Food Commission was advised by the Factory of its inability to make further deliveries upon the price contracted for, but offering to do so if the sum of \$40.80 per bag of 250 pounds was offered; that is to say at the rate of 16 8-25 cents per pound.

The error of this procedure is plainly manifest. Were it extra sugar being thus charged for, one would be able to understand "the move", but it is the remainder of the sugar contracted for at a given price, that is being re-charged.

Again, too, it must be had in remembrance that, but for the action taken by the Food Commission for the amelioration of the threatened situation, that merchants here would not have cancelled their intentions of importing sugar for home consumption.

The Colonial Council, however, during its session held yesterday afternoon, introduced and adopted a resolution to the effect that in view of the gravity of the situation that has arisen, and the hardships, entailed upon the people by the inability to procure sugar thro the refusal of the St. Croix Sugar Factory to comply with its obligation in the delivery of the 180 tons remaining from the amount contracted for, that the Government lay an embargo upon the sugar required, in spite of whatever steps the Factory might take. Needless to say, this met with the hearty endorsement of all the members. There was however, during this period of the proceedings of the council,

a little something "quizzical and dubious," but of which, more anon. Today the people are on their "mettle" there being a firm belief evinced that there is sugar being stored up somewhere here, for future financial manipulation.

Let us sincerely hope that the recommendations of the Council will be heeded, and that Government's action will be swift and decisive, to the betterment and interest of the community at large.

—St. Thomas Mail Notes, August 6th.

Needs of the Virgin Islands.

"With irrigation sugar production in the Virgin Islands could be doubled," declared Robert L. Merwin, of St. Croix, former American consul general there, at the Willard. "This year the total production will approximate 12,000 tons. The rainfall in the Virgin Islands averages 45 inches a year, but has never been conserved by impounding. This could be done, in my judgment, without a great deal of difficult engineering, and with the utilization of this water it would be possible to more than double production. Sugar is the principal crop of St. Croix, and there are perhaps 10,000 acres of arable lands. The three principal islands comprising the Virgin group are St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John. St. Thomas is almost exclusively given over to shipping, but St. Croix is an agricultural island. There is very little produced there in an agricultural way except sugar, but it would be entirely possible to raise other things with an adequate water supply.

"Since the United States acquired the Virgin Islands from Denmark about three years ago at a cost of \$25,000,000 they have been under the administration of the Navy Department, but under the act of Congress the islands are directly under the President. A congressional committee that visited the islands recently made a report that contains a great many inaccuracies as to the conditions in the islands, but this is not surprising, inasmuch as the members of the commission, headed by Senator Kenyon, spent only one actual working day in St. Croix. The people of the islands would prefer to have the Navy Department continue its administration of the islands.

"The future of the Virgin Islands will depend to a great extent upon the attitude of government at Washington and the pleasure of investment America. St. Croix could be made one of the greatest tourists spot in the West Indies. Our trouble is that we have neither hotels nor transportation. The establishment of one depends in a measure upon the other. The climate of St. Croix is delightful. I think I have never known the temperature to go above 89 degrees Fahrenheit, while the minimum is about 73, although there have been times when it went as low as 65 degrees.—Washington Post, July 23rd.