

St. Croix Avis.

75TH YEAR.

CHRISTIANSTED. V. I. U. S. A. MONDAY 6TH DECEMBER 1920.

No. 282.

THE ST. CROIX AVIS

is printed and published daily (Sundays and Holidays excepted) by G. Johansen at the Avis Office.

TERMS---50 cents monthly in advance.
2 cents per single copy.

Entered as second-class matter May 26th 1917 at the Post Office at Christiansted, St. Croix, V. I. of the U. S. A., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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St. Thomas News.

Murderers of the American ss. "Polar Star" sentenced—Lopez to lose his life—Soto to 6 years in penitentiary—Counsel for defendants antagonistic—Gives notice of appeal.

Yesterday afternoon, Monday the 29th inst. the case "Government versus Jose Lopez and Jose Soto," came up for final judgement when Lopez, who is a Spaniard, 24 years of age, and a Romanist by faith, and charged with the wilful murder of E. J. Dougherty, a stoker on board the American S S. "Polar Star," lying in port on the night of September 9th inst. was sentenced to death; and Soto 24 years of age, of Cewcales, Chili; and likewise a Roman Catholic, to six years in the penitentiary for his complicity in the crime, and for his malicious assault upon, and dangerous wounding of Patrick Joseph Donahue, a fellow seaman, and who still lies injured, and minus an eye, in the Municipal Hospital. Appearing for the Prosecution was Lawyer Geo. A. Keyser, Government's Attorney, while Captain Leo F. S. Horan, U. S. M. C., and acting-Government Secretary, appeared for the defence.

This case, from its uniqueness, had created all along a very deep and painful impression.

From time to time the court had sat; but through the stubbornness of the defendants to acknowledge the committal of the crime, through the apparent lack of sufficient testimony to convict them, as well as through "unpreparedness"

on the part of the prosecution, the Court had invariably adjourned. To assist the Hon'ble Judge Thiele, four of our most reputed and worthy citizens, in the persons of Messrs. E. D. Boardman, Warren S. Lee, J. E. Knutz and R. Miller, had been appointed, while the Hon'ble Conrad Corneiro was appointed an interpreter.

Among the various witnesses and members of the crew who testified to the murder, etc., and whose sworn testimonies lie recorded in the courts, was John Patrick Mc Crystal, oiler, who accused Lopez of killing Dougherty, Charles H. Mann, coal-passer, Angel Coesti, who told of the argument between the prisoner and his victim, and of the subsequent fight. The sailor, whose testimony is of interest, told of the challenge tendered each other, and how Lopez took a knife and followed Dougherty out of the room. Another witness for the prosecution was Walter Smith, deck engineer, who, however, claimed to have been absent at the time. Another important witness was Pedro Preche, 25 years of age, who told of the quarrel that led to such fatal results. He had returned from on shore in a car, with others. Going on board the ship, he had gone to the crew's quarters, where he found Lopez and Dougherty quarrelling. Then he saw Lopez leave the room with a knife. Soto was also taking part in the quarrel, and called for a fellow-seaman, Smith, in a threatening way.

Mc Crystal, again testifying, told how he had been calling for "Canny;" how he had met Donohue coming up a ladder, followed by Lopez, who carried a huge knife. Behind, came Dougherty, upon Lopez turned and stabbed, so that he fell. The "Canny" mentioned a while ago, is John Canon, fireman, 32 years old, who testified to having been on shore until 6 p. m., when having to go "on watch" at 8 o'clock, he had returned to the ship. Finding everything O. K. he had gone strolling along the docks, when he heard the whistles blowing, calling for the police. A. F. Wilsor, coal passer, told of the argument between the two men, and of having seen Soto leave the room also with a knife. Stabbing at him, Wilsor returned to the crew's room. Soon, Lopez with a long butcher's knife re-entered the room. Soon the room was vacant, so he did not see the stabbing.

Robert Andrews, oiler, 26 years, told how he had been attacked by Soto with

a knife, and how he had been saved by Lopez throwing himself between him and his assailant. There were many other witnesses, most of whom testified to having had a couple glasses of beer while on shore, but who scrupulously maintained that no one was really intoxicated. The prisoners had likewise been on shoreleave, and had also had some beer, but not to that extent as to make them intoxicated. Returning to the ship the men had congregated in the crew's room, when the row—apparently over the right to a bunk—had started.

With such clear proofs as to the non-justification for the perpetration of so foul a deed, it is nothing to be wondered at that the Government's Attorney in the person of Lawyer Geo. A. Keyser made so urgent and strenuous an appeal for conviction during the sitting of the Court last Wednesday morning. Faced by the incontrovertible evidence against his clients, is it any wonder that the Counsel for the defense, Capt. Horan, endeavoured to tear the evidence of the witnesses to pieces? Failing in this, however, he made an "appeal for clemency" on behalf of the unfortunate prisoners in a brilliant manner, and in words that went to the hearts of the audience, citing as an example the case recently of Small vs. Samuel. No decision having been reached as to the penalty to be inflicted, sentence was delayed until further.

Yesterday afternoon, however, the Judges met at 3 o'clock, and were in session until long after 5 o'clock. At 4.46 p. m. the prisoners were brought from their cells, and seated in the lobby of the Court. At 5.45 the Judges entered the Court room, and the prisoners and the lawyers took their respective places.

"Let the prisoners stand before the Bar" said Judge Thiele "and receive their sentences."

"Jose Lopez" said he, "you have been found guilty of murder, and have been sentenced to lose your life. (Profound silence.) Jose Soto, as an accomplice in the crime, you have been sentenced to six years in the penitentiary."

Captain Horan as counsel for the defendants was visibly taken aback by the verdict of the Court, and gave instant notice of his intention to appeal to the Third Circuit Court of Philadelphia, and asked for a copy of the entire Court proceedings. Lawyer Key-

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