

MISCELLANEOUS

C.S.

1927.

No.

239/27.

Mr. S. H. Riches.

SUBJECT.

1927

7th June. 1927

Previous Paper.

REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY MR. S. H. RICHES
REGARDING HIS SON, A PRISONER IN STANLEY GAOL.

MINUTES.

Petition by Mr S H Riches to H E the Cdy. Governor
6th June 1927

Minute from H E the Cdy. Governor 6th June 1927

Cy. Magistrate

Referred

M. B.

Officer

7 June 1927

The Hon. Col. Sec.

The very Revd the Dean came to see me about this matter and informed me of what he had been told by prisoner Riches - I informed the Dean that I could not discuss the matter as prisoner had pleaded guilty to the charge and that in answer to the Court he stated he had not been induced or threatened by any of the other accused to commit the offence but that he had done it on his own initiative.

2. I have no observations to make

Subsequent Paper.

beyond that prisoner Riches received a fair and impartial trial and was given every opportunity to bring forward any extenuating circumstances.

3. Depositions are not taken in cases which can be dealt with in the lower Court.

4. Magistrate's notes of evidence book is sent herewith - please see pages 255 to 261. In cases where a plea of "Guilty" is entered the Court may proceed to judgment without calling witnesses - in this case evidence was taken in order that prisoners could have every opportunity of cross examining.

Mr. Frank Stalder
Magistrate
7.6.27.

Yours faithfully,
Submitted.

W. J. J. J.
D. J. J. J.
7 June 1927

Off. Sec.

Please reply that after full consideration of all the circumstances of the case I report that I see no reason to interfere with the sentence of the Court.

J. J. J.

8.6.27.

Letter to Mr S. A. Riches, 8th June, 1927.

Stanley,

Monday 6th. 1927.

*Received
6.6.27
J.P.*

To His Excellency,
The Acting Governor.

Re. Reginald Lawrence Riches, now serving a sentence of three months imprisonment in the Stanley Gaol, and passed upon him on the 14th. of May last.

Certain facts having come to my notice since the trial of this prisoner, I consider it my duty to lay them before Your Excellency on his behalf.

It will be noticed in the depositions taken in the Court at the trial, that when the Chief Constable made his first appearance at the Cookhouse, the prisoner Cox remarked to him "I'll take the blame"; the Chief Constable then withdrew and returned later to make further inquiries. Upon the appearance of the four prisoners in the dock at the first hearing I noticed that the above prisoner - my son - was the most youthful of the four, indeed, any casual observer would have noticed this, and further, would have asked themselves how it came about that he was pleading guilty to the more serious charge: I came away impressed, that there was more underlying this plea than had been brought out in evidence, therefore, I requested the Dean of Christ Church to visit my son on the first visiting day at the Gaol, and see for himself whether anything was being kept back; this he did on the 21st. of that month, he then came to my house after the visit and told both myself and my wife, that he (the above prisoner) had made a voluntary confession to him (the Dean) that he was innocent of the charge for which he had pleaded guilty and had been sentenced: on the following Monday, the 23rd., I believe he also brought this to the notice of the Magistrate.

Whilst the Dean was visiting the Gaol on the afternoon of the 21st., a man arrived in Stanley from Fitzroy Station and told the Aunt of the above prisoner, that after the Chief Constable had paid his first visit to the Cookhouse and had left, there was a plan conceived between them - so he was informed by the above prisoner, just before they left that station to come to Stanley - that he (Riches) should take the blame when they appeared before the

(2)

the Magistrate, this was conceived, who I submit, is the master mind, Cox, "that my son, he being the youngest should take all the blame for entering the Store" as there would only be a fine imposed, and your father would pay that, and when we get out we will square up your fine with him": had this man reported that at Fitzroy to the Chief Constable, it would have made all the difference to this prisoner at the trial, and would have shewn how this youth had been shamefully led into this trouble.

This youth is not a thief at heart, if his confession is to be accepted, and I submit there is corroboration in the statement above referred to, he has been led into this by men older than himself, and been branded a thief for a theft he never committed, and have thus lost his character at the age of 18 years. The people of Stanley are horrified, and from the first never believed for one moment that he was the leading light in this exploit, more so, seeing that two of the other three are from the United Kingdom and served in the Great War, and are therefore men of the world, the third being a drunken ne'er-do-well of local birth.

When the Assistant Manager returned to Fitzroy after attending at this Trial, he looked round for the key which would open the door of the building where the theft took place, and sure enough, found the very key in the door of Cox's room: here we have damning evidence why Cox, in the first instance, said "I'll take the blame", and later, by shifting the blame on the shoulders of the youngest, with the plan of settling the fine when he was released, and putting forth the key which would not open the store door when it was tried by the Chief Constable, the Asst. Manager, and the prisoner Riches himself, I submit that this finding of the key in the door of the prisoner Cox, supports the theory why he wanted to shift the blame on to another's shoulders, and thus remove suspicion from himself: had all these keys been gathered up before these men were brought to Stanley, this key must have weighed heavily against him, but he cunningly conceived the plan so as to remove this suspicion.

For two years my son was employed in the Treasury, he held no official status; he was taken in by a former Treasurer in this manner. In October 1924, H.E. Sir Johⁿ/Middleton, asked me through the Treasurer to go South, as I had put in the previous season down there I declined, owing to the fact that my son (the above prisoner) was leaving school

was leaving school at the end of the year, and I wanted to be here so as to keep him from running the roads, the Treasurer replied, "you go South and I will see the Governor to let me occupy his time in the Treasury, so I went South. He remained in the Treasury for two years, most of that time he did not draw any pay, and he in the ordinary way came in touch with trays of money, particularly at the end of the month, was employed in counting out bags of money into trays, ready for the Clerk to pay over the counter, and generally, was in a position where the temptation was great for a lad not drawing wages; but in face of this I have been assured by the Treasury Clerks that they never doubted his honesty.

This lad has been born and brought ^{up} in Stanley, he had never been away from his home before going to Fitzroy, he has led a most righteous life, and therefore I am unable to believe he has taken any but a very minor part in this affair, and that through being misled astray by a lot of scamps, as I have already said, he has lost his character, having regard to the foregoing facts, for a theft he never committed, and it may be said, that his whole life is blasted as a result.

I most respectfully ask Your Excellency to give the most earnest attention to the following points-

- The remark made by Cox to the Chief Constable, when the latter paid his first visit to the Cookhouse viz. "I'll take the blame".
- (2) The plan concocted during the Chief Constable's absence, as to the taking of the blame and the payment of Fines - as related by the prisoner Riches to the man at Fitzroy. (Mr. S. Aldridge is the man referred to)
 - (3) The finding of the identical key in the door of Cox's room at the Cookhouse, which fitted the Store.
 - (4) The confession made to Dean Vaughan by the prisoner Riches, which fits in with the plan outlined and related to Mr. S. Aldridge at Fitzroy, before they were brought into Stanley by the Chief Constable.

In conclusion, Your Excellency has the power under Ordinance 5 - Sec. 7, to commute this sentence, and I pray you will restore him to his family earlier than his sentence implies, who will help him to redeem the character he has so easily lost.

I am, Your Excellency's obedient servant

S. Riches

*Grant Ordinance
No. 5 of 1898*

Early (4)

● Off. 1st Sect.

Please refer the
attached petition to the
Magistrate for his observations.

2. I should like to see
a copy of the depositions
of the Magistrate taken
at the trial.

6. 6. 27. J. G.

239 /27.

8th June,

27.

Sir,

I am directed by the Acting Governor to acknowledge the receipt of your memorial on the subject of your son's imprisonment, and to inform you that after full consideration of all the circumstances of the case His Excellency regrets that he sees no reason to interfere with the sentence of the Court.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,



for Colonial Secretary.

MR. S. H. RICHES,
STANLEY.