

CRUELTY TO A COW

LOCAL TRADESMAN HEAVILY FINED

C.T. February 22, 1941

CHARGED with causing unnecessary suffering to a cow, Herbert Charles Troke, of 33, Wick Lane, Christchurch, was at Christchurch Police Court, on Monday, fined £15 with £2 7s. 0d. costs, with an alternative of one month's imprisonment. He pleaded not guilty.

Mr. H. Liddicoat, Inspector of the R.S.P.C.A., who prosecuted, said that on Sunday, 12th January, a cow belonging to accused was caught in a bog. Troke's cowman, Mundy, obtained assistance at about 5.30 p.m., and the cow was pulled out of the bog and left out in the open without anything being done for it except two feeds of hay. He said that Troke had shown a total disregard for the welfare of the animal.

Pulled Cow Out Of Mire.

Raymond J. Maidment, of 40, Bridge Street, stated that he helped to pull the cow out of the mire in which it was sunk so as to completely cover its legs. It was got on to higher ground and bedded down and given a feed of hay. In answer to Mr. Liddicoat witness said he was a cow keeper and thoroughly used to cattle, he thought hay was a suitable food for a cow in that condition. He said the cow had been fighting hard to get out of the bog and was exhausted. Owing to the boggy nature of the ground it was impossible to get the animal away. He saw the cow fed again by Troke's man on the Monday and he could not see that the animal could have been removed alive from the spot where it was left.

It was explained that the bog was a wide ditch dividing land at the rear of the gas works.

Lorraine Ward said he assisted to get the cow from the bog. Mundy, the cowman, was doing his best to get the cow out and he, witness, fetched a stouter rope. When they got the cow out it was unable to use its back legs, probably through being cold, and they had to leave it on the high ground. Rushes were put round it to protect it from the cold wind.

Animal's Emaciated Condition.

P.C. Knight said that on the following Wednesday morning he went to the field and saw a brown and white shorthorn cow lying on the ground. It was in an emaciated condition, cold and shivering; there was a bitter north wind blowing and the ground was frozen hard; no shelter had been provided for the animal. He could see no signs of food or water having been given to the animal. He tried to get the cow to rise, but it fell back exhausted.

Later that morning he saw Troke who in a statement, said he had been told the cow had fallen in the ditch, but had not been to see it as he was too busy with his milk rounds.

In answer to Mr. Liddicoat, P.C. Knight said he had had experience of cows; he thought that in the condition the cow was in it should have been given a linseed drink or some warm bran mash and given shelter. Troke, he said, seemed indifferent about the cow. He thought the dykes could have been bridged over to remove the cow, the ground was frozen and hard.

P.C. Carpenter said he accompanied P.C. Knight and Inspector Liddicoat to the field on the Wednesday, and was present when Miss Scutt saw the animal and ordered it to be destroyed. He said Troke treated the occurrence in a very casual manner.

Shot On The Spot.

Inspector Liddicoat, in evidence, said the cow was emaciated, its legs were stiff and cold; it was shivering and unable to rise. He called Miss Scutt, a veterinary surgeon, who ordered the animal to be immediately destroyed. He, witness, shot the animal on the spot.

He saw accused who told him he had not been near the cow, but had been told it had been got out of the ditch. He had seen the cow when he went for some petrol and passed it about three hundred yards away. Witness said he told Troke that as owner he was responsible for looking after the cow.

Miss Christine Mary Scutt, M.R.C.V.S., of Magnolia House, Bridge Street, stated that when she saw the cow the rushes had been disturbed as though the animal had struggled. It was too weak to raise its head. In the condition in which she saw the cow it was too weak to eat hay. It should have had a tarpaulin or something else over it on the Sunday night.

Questioned by Mr. Liddicoat, witness the animal was suffering from exposure which, would have gradually increased by being left out in the cold, otherwise the cow seemed quite healthy and should have been of food value.

Did All They Could.

Frank George Mundy, cowman to Mr. Troke, said after getting the cow out of the ditch he fed it on the Sunday night and covered it over. The animal was fed twice a day up until the Wednesday, when it was shot. He gave it plenty of hay, as much as he gave the other cows. It was not possible to get the animal away, it had taken eight men to drag it away when it was dead. Mr. Troke had asked him if the cow was all right, and he and Mr. Troke had done all they could for the animal.

Questioned by Mr. Liddicoat, witness said he was not a very experienced cowman, but was doing duty for a cowman who was away. He did not rub the cow's limbs.

After retiring the magistrates said they had decided to convict.

Inspector Thomas said there was nothing known against the accused. Inspector Liddicoat said he had twice warned accuser before, once two years ago and again last year.

Troke denied this, he said he received a letter from the society last year about a cow he had got out of a bog and put under cover, but had not had any warning previously.

Announcing the fine, as stated above, the chairman, Major W. O. Campbell said it was a very bad case of deliberate neglect.

The magistrates were Major W.O. Campbell (chairman), the Earl of Malmesbury, Brig.-Gen. J. G. Browne and Mrs. Norman Barnes.