

"LEICESTER"

(B. C. Glas)

I this morning attended the announcement by the Wreck Commissioner of the Finding in the case of the Inquiry into the Casualty which was sustained by the above ship on 15th September 1948.

During a hurricane the vessel took a list of 30°, about which she rolled. At the time of abandoning ship this had increased to about 50°. Six lives were lost.

The Court finds that the ship took this list in consequence of the ballast shifting to port due to inefficient securing of shifting boards of deficient strength.

No blame attached to anyone other than the Marine Superintendent who was responsible for the arrangement of shifting boards as fitted.

Practically the whole of the 1500 tons of solid ballast (Thames ballast) was carried in the tween decks with the object of reducing the metacentric height, which in these "Sam" ships is about 11½ feet in the light condition.

The shifting boards were arranged on the centre line clear of the hatchways and alongside the port and starboard sides of each hatchway. There were no shifting boards across the thwartship coamings of the hatchways. The shifting boards were only 5' 3" in height.

The Court was of opinion that it would have been better if one-third of the ballast had been carried in the holds, but would have considered the actual arrangement satisfactory if the shifting boards themselves had been satisfactory.

The possibility that the deck might sag owing to the weight of the ballast should have been anticipated when designing the arrangement of stiffeners, but the latter were themselves overloaded.

Much had been learned from this Inquiry regarding the use of solid ballast, and the Ministry were urged to take adequate measures to see that efficient shifting boards were required as a measure of seaworthiness.

S.E.B.

10. 8.49

Mr. Shuffheard  
in T. & B. C.

Noted J.F.

*[Handwritten signature]*

Noted R.M.



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