

"LADY COMBE" LOSS.

**Court Unable to Give
Exact Cause.**

TRIBUTE TO BUILDERS' SKILL.

The Board of Trade Inquiry into the mysterious disappearance of the Clyde-built dredger *Lady Combe* in December, 1927, on a voyage to Lagos, was concluded at Glasgow yesterday, when the formal findings of the Court were announced. The President, Mr. G. W. Wilton, K.C., read the findings as follows:—

"The Court having carefully inquired into the circumstances attending the loss of the dredger *Lady Combe*, find that the loss of the vessel and her crew was probably due to its being overwhelmed somewhere after passing the Calf of Man in the heavy weather prevailing for a considerable time during December, 1927, but, in the absence of direct evidence, the Court is unable to return the exact cause of the casualty."

The recommendations of the Court were:

"(a) In view of the evidence that vessels of this type have to turn stern on to wind and sea during heavy weather the Court is of opinion that it would contribute to the safety of similar vessels if the spaces above the bulwarks aft were filled in with temporary boarding for the overseas voyage and also that no doors leading below should be made of wood; (b) that in the case of bucket dredgers having a high and heavy superstructure, provision should be made by all parties responsible for their design, construction and ocean-going preparation for complete investigation as to their stability and for this information being made available to the owners and to those responsible for the overseas delivery."

Points in the questions dealt with revealed that the Court considered (a) that the vessel was properly supplied with life-saving appliances and carried distress signals; (b) that the construction and equipment of the vessel was satisfactory and such as to ensure seaworthiness; (c) that, generally speaking, the preparations for sea were adequate, subject to the space between the bulwarks and the shade deck aft being boarded up, and further that steel doors instead of wood doors should have been fitted for access to the steering-gear platform. It might even be thought desirable to provide for the lowering of the centre of gravity and removal of the buckets. That action would have materially increased the safety of the vessel and the lives of those on board; (d) that vessels of the type of the *Lady Combe* could make ocean voyages in the winter months provided that full and proper consideration was given to the construction and design and also the preparation and transport of vessels of that type.

Before the Court rose, the PRESIDENT announced that the Assessors desired to state that, in their opinion, the builders, Messrs. Lobnitz & Co., Ltd., Renfrew, exercised generally all due skill and care in view of and in the light of their very long experience in the design, construction and preparation of the vessel for sea, and made due provision for the safe delivery thereof at her destination. In those remarks he concurred.



© 2021

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

014738-014750-0154