

Reference *P*

Lloyds Register of British
and Foreign Shipping.

LLOYDS' REGISTER,
LONDON.

REC'D 13 JUN. 90

ANSR 17

Aberdeen

June 12th 1890.

The Secretary
Lloyds Register of Shipping,
Sir

I am in receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, respecting the loss of the S.S. "Bonaccorsi", requesting me to state, whether "I have any grounds for believing the sea valve was closed, when the pumps ceased working", and also to explain, how it was possible to close this valve, with nine feet of water in the engine room". In reply thereto I beg respectfully to state, that with such an amount of water in the engine-room, it would be almost impossible to close this valve; but

whether it was closed when the pumps ceased working, or before the water had accumulated to such a depth, I am unable to state, as the Chief Engineer left Sturden without affording me an opportunity of asking him a few questions, respecting the vessel's loss. The Superintendent Engineer also failed to see him before his departure; so that any remarks made by me are based simply on the evidence stated in Court.

But even if this valve had been closed, the water could still find its way into the vessel, for the discharge valve would then be below the water line, and the centrifugal pumps being stopped, the water could pass through the discharge pipe, and through the centrifugal pumps, into the tank, and out through the manhole into the engine room.

As regards the efficiency of the

centrifugal pump. I have no doubt whatever. It is true the chief engineer stated in his evidence, that "this pump did not pump steady" (though previously it had worked splendidly) assigning as the cause, that "it only caught the water as the water rolled towards the pump".

This however could not be; as the tank was full and the suction pipes being on the bottom, would be completely immersed; besides, the longitudinal girders would prevent any undue wash of the water, even if the tank had not been quite full.

The reason why this pump might not work steadily, would be because the suction pipes were evidently surrounded by the coals, which had been carried into the tank, through the rush of water, when the manhole cover was removed. I learn that when this pump was brought into

operation, the manhole door was "broken off". This I regard as a serious error of judgement, for had the nuts been merely slackened back, the door could have been eased sufficiently, to permit the water to run into the tank; but without allowing any coals or other obstruction to follow. But the better plan would have been, to start the joint of the tank suction pipe in the engine room; the engineer would then have been able, not only to keep his suction clear, but also at once to detect whether the water was passing back from the sea, into the ship. Had this been done I am strongly of opinion, that the vessel would not have foundered.

It is to be regretted that the Engineer assessor did not elicit more information on this subject as the conclusion of the whole matter must therefore be

more or less hypothetical. One thing however seems quite clear, that the available pumping power was, if rightly used, sufficient to have cleared the vessel. as I have been with vessels fitted with centrifugal pumps and can fully appreciate their value.

I am perfectly well aware that it is one thing to be sitting in an office, stating what might have been done, but quite a different matter to be on board of the vessel; but the above suggestions are what I myself have done when placed in similar circumstances.

I could say much more on this very unfortunate case but perhaps my reply to your letter is already too lengthy

I am Sir
Your Obedient Servant
G. L. Skidman

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For Mr Allison

B.M.

13.6.90

W.S.



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