TELEPHONE: WEST HARTLEPOOL 2432.

Lloyd's Register of Shipping,

47, Church Street, West Hartlepool.

28th July, 1949.

Reference

.....

Dear Sir,

s.s. "WARREN GROVE"

With reference to the inquiry which has been going on at Hartlepool into the loss of the above ship I regret that owing to the late finish I did not get a letter sent to London last night but owing to Mr. Berry's evidence that the Society notified owners when dry dockings were due I 'phoned Mr. Sladden at his home regarding that evidence and informed him that the Society's Surveyors had given their evidence that afternoon. Mr. Sladden suggested that I should personally give evidence to-day and lay any misapprehension in the mind of the court and he confirmed that the Society did not notify owners regarding dry docking. Mr. Sladden informed me that the practice was to inform owners if dry docking had been delayed up to 2 years.

This morning the Ministry of Transport Surveyor continued his evidence as to stability calculations.

I was then allowed to give evidence regarding Mr. Berry's statement and made the position clear in accordance with what Mr. Sladden had said on the telephone. I also informed them that the 1948/49 Rules, where dry docking is required at intervals of approximately one year, were dated 4th November, 1948, but the books were not issued until later than that date. I also said that the 1947/48 Rules stated that "when a vessel was placed in dry dock the Society's Surveyors are to avail themselves of the opportunity to examine her" but these Rules do not mention that the ship should be docked every 12 months. I was cross-examined by Mr. McLean for the National Union of Seamen regarding cement boxes and stated that when a cement box has been fitted and certified until the next dry docking it could remain for that time. Mr. McLean asked if that held if the time was more than 12 months and I agreed that was so. Asked by the Commissioner if Lloyd's surveys got more severe as the ship got older I said that — continue

this was covered by the Rules where extra requirements were demanded as the age of the ship increased.

The Commissioner asked if I had ever seen a copy of the Ministry of Transport Circular issued in October, 1948, to owners, captains etc., dealing with the Ministry's suggestions regarding several items which should be watched. This circular was evidently made out after the loss of three ships the first mentioned on the list being the "STURDEE ROSE", but I stated I did not remember seeing it . The Commissioner then asked me if there were any items on any ship which I personally considered should be examined more strigently, I stated that this was a matter for my London Office.

See Lloyd's recent article

The Manager, Mr. Scott, for the Shipping Company, was then cross-examined, after which the captain of the "WARREN COURT", a ship belonging to the same company, gave evidence on behalf of the owners.

The Owners, including the captain of the "WARREN COURT", were also asked if they had seen the Ministry of Transport Circular but neither could recollect seeing it.

In the summing up the Ministry's advocate, Mr. Baker, criticised the owners for not giving this circular to their captains after receipt from the Ministry of Transport, but a message was later brought into court that the Ministry had omitted to send the circular to the Chamber of Shipping and the owners had not received it.

In his summing up the advocate for the National Union of Seamen, Mr. McLean, stated that he would like to suggest that ships over 24 years old should be docked every 12 months at a maximum, and also that in spite of Lloyd's Rules the special survey of these ships should be held every 2 years.

In his final summing up the Ministry's advocate criticised the owner's consulting engineers, Messrs. Barnett & Sedgewick, for not calling in Lloyd's Register Surveyors about the fitting of cement boxes and stated this practice should be stopped. He also criticised Mr. Sheffer's attitude in the conduct of his Load Line Survey, stating he was too rigid. Regarding a reported leak the advocate said Mr. Sheffer had accepted a statement from some one, viz., "we cannot find a leak", as being satisfactory, but the Commissioner pointed out on looking back over Mr. Sheffer's evidence that the words actually used were "there was no leak" which the Commissioner stated

was much more definite.

This finished the proceedings but afterwards the Ministry of Transport's solicitor informed Mr. Sheffer, in my presence, that he did not agree with the statement the Advocate had made and the criticism was not made on his instructions. Mr. Hawkins, the Ministry Surveyor, also informed Mr. Sheffer that he also was surprised at the criticism and had not instructed the Advocate in this statement.

The decision of the court is to be announced at 3 pm. to-morrow.

Yours faithfully,

W. J. Craig.

The Secretary,
LONDON.

Referred to the Chief Ship Surveyor.

Also for Mr. Sladden to note.

27.7.26

Yours faithfully,

The decision of the court is to be announced at 2 pm to-morrow.

The case was then adjourned.