

“WARREN GROVE” LOSS DUE TO WEATHER

Low Margin of Stability Finding

COURT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ministry of Transport Court of inquiry, sitting at West Hartlepool, yesterday announced its findings in the case of the *Warren Grove*, of 351 tons gross, which foundered off the Firth of Forth on Nov. 9 last while on a voyage from Hartlepool to Buckie with coal with the loss of seven of her crew of 10.

The Court found that the vessel's loss was due to “the initial low margin of stability combined with sudden increase in wind and sea resulting in some shifting of cargo and/or bunkers allowing water to enter the vessel and produce an increasing list finally causing the vessel to founder.” Her loss was not caused or attributable to the wrongful act or default of her owners (Challis, Stern & Co., Ltd.), manager or her late master. The Court, over which Mr. J. V. Naisby, K.C., presided, assisted by Captain J. H. Grimston, Mr. J. Shand and Mr. L. C. Burrill as assessors, recommend that consideration should be given to the question of the compulsory carrying of transmitting wireless sets in such coasters and for strengthening the requirements in respect of the survey of old vessels. The previous proceedings were reported in LLOYD'S LIST of July 26, 27, 28 and 29.

The Court, in its report, states that the officers and crew of the ship seemed to have lived up to the traditions of their calling. There was a special word for A. B. Mair “who was to a considerable degree responsible for saving the lives of Reid and Robertson. All three displayed fortitude and initiative.”

None of the coastguard stations (those in the vicinity were not on bad weather watch) observed any of the ship's distress signals, although one of them had been seen by a member of the public, who, unfortunately, made no report of it at the time. There was “no evidence to imply that any repairs suggested to the owners in respect of the ship were ever refused,” and “it seems fair to state that the evidence indicated that both officers and crew seemed content in the employment of their owners and that the vessel was a happy ship.”

UNSATISFACTORY METHOD OF SUPERINTENDENCE

The report added: “The Court, however, feel that mention must be made of the method of superintendence adopted in this case. It desires to express its strong view that any repair on a classed vessel must be done under the supervision of the Classification Society's surveyor. In the case of the *Warren Grove* that particular task, governing the seaworthiness of the vessel, fell upon the master and chief engineer. In the view of the Court this is a far from satisfactory method of superintendence, and constituted a failure by the registered manager as such. It was perhaps fortunate for him that this failure in this regard does not in the circumstances of this case, seem to have contributed to the cause of the loss.”

The Court made the following recommendations:

(1) Consideration should be given to the question of the compulsory carrying of both transmitting and receiving wireless, even in the case of coasting vessels.

(2) That the requirements in respect of the examinations of old vessels, and particularly coasters, should be strengthened.

[The Merchant Shipping (Safety Conventions) Bill, the purpose of which is to implement the 1948 International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea, extends the compulsory carriage of wireless to cargo ships of between 500 and 1600 tons gross. The Bill, which has passed through the House of Commons, received its second reading in the House of Lords in June.—Ed.]



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