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The Principal Surveyor,
 Lloyd's Register of Shipping,
 751 Victoria Square,
 Montreal,
 Quebec.

Dear Sir:

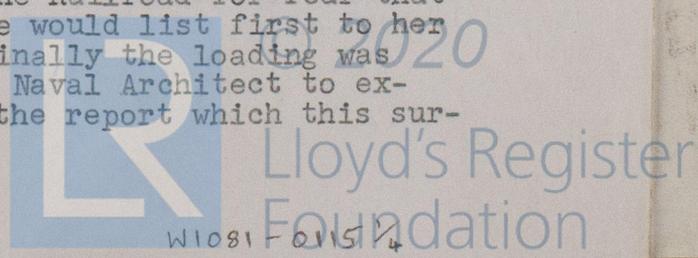
S/S NORTH VOYAGEUR - Our File 108,879

We represent the Underwriters at Lloyd's, who insured the S/S NORTH VOYAGEUR, which sank and became a total loss off the coast of Newfoundland on October 22 of last year. We have been asked by Underwriters to investigate the cause of the sinking of the vessel.

At the time of the loss the NORTH VOYAGEUR was en route with a cargo of coal from Philadelphia to St. Johns, Newfoundland, and it is alleged that the vessel had a list of 5° or 10° to port when she entered the Port of Philadelphia with a cargo of about 800 tons of paper, which she had loaded at Bay Comeau, Quebec, and that the same degree of list was present when she left Philadelphia with her cargo of coal. Eight members of the crew who survived, have given statements at St. Johns that the vessel's list grew worse after leaving Philadelphia until on October 22, the date of the sinking, it had increased to 45°.

We are satisfied from our investigation to date that the loss was not due to perils of the sea. The vessel did not encounter any unusual weather. In fact, during most of her voyage favorable conditions were experienced. The only exception was wind reaching Force 6 and 7 on the 22nd, and this blow could not in our opinion have been dangerous or even threatening to a seaworthy craft.

The NORTH VOYAGEUR was loaded by the Reading Railroad at its Port Richmond Terminal, Philadelphia, with about 900 tons of coal. During the progress of the loading operation the list was a matter of concern to the Railroad for fear that the vessel would damage its pier. She would list first to her port and then to her starboard, and finally the loading was stopped and the Railroad brought in a Naval Architect to examine her. We quote an excerpt from the report which this surveyor made to the Reading Company:



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The Principal Surveyor, (2)

"The ship was narrow and cranky and some time after she had been built, an additional superstructure had been added, raising her center of gravity and reducing her stability. The double bottom ballast tanks had no center line or divisional bulkhead so that free water had run from side to side, depending on which way the ship was listed. The only way these ballast tanks can add to the stability of the ship is to press them tight so that there would not be any free surface of water. It is understood that the engineer on the ship refused to do this because it would reduce the capacity of the cargo they could carry on their fixed load line; also the ballast suction lines to the double bottom are on the center line so that the double bottom cannot be pumped dry except when the ship is on an even keel."

We have interviewed the Railroad's Manager of the Port Richmond Terminal, the foreman and several other of the Railroad Company employes, who were on the pier. The master and chief engineer of the vessel, who were on board during the loading operation and who were part owners of the vessel, went down with the ship, but it would appear from the statements of the Railroad Company employes that they refused to press the double bottom ballast tanks or pump them dry, with the result that free slack water in the tanks either with no longitudinal bulkhead or with one which was not water tight, ran from side to side as the cargo of coal was either loaded to one side or the other. The result was that the ship was constantly without any stabilizing interval to mention, listed continuously as much as 10° or 12° to port and then to starboard. At the time the vessel left Philadelphia on October 15, she was almost on an even keel, but as stated, the list gradually grew worse until she heeled over at a 45° angle and sank on October 22.

It is our belief that the owners may have in order to receive as much revenue from freight as possible, sacrificed the stability of the vessel for cargo, but in any event, it seems quite clear to us that with free water in her double bottom tanks, this, particularly if the vessel were tender, could have accounted for the list increasing to the point that the vessel turned over.



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The Principal Surveyor, (3)

We should like very much to address inquiries to Mr. R. D. Campbell and Mr. D. Halkett, surveyors to Lloyd's Register of Shipping, who surveyed the NORTH VOYAGEUR at the port of Quebec, P.Q., the first survey being on July 13, 1950, and the last, September 13, 1950, and whose reports of survey for repairs, etc., engines and boilers, were issued on September 14, 1950. The examination was for Special Survey and the vessel was given a classification 100A1.

The survey report shows that all double bottom tanks were tested under water pressure and examined internally and that the fore and after peak tanks were tested under water pressure to rule requirements and examined internally. We should like to know whether Messrs. Campbell and Halkett observed if there was a divisional bulkhead in the double bottom tanks and if so, whether it was water-tight. We should also like to know whether the examination of the vessel or the history of the vessel showed that a superstructure had been added to the vessel since her original building. The Railroad Company employes state that she had a high double bridge with two big masts, and that the owners intended when they had made sufficient money, to cut her down and fix her up. It was not possible for the Naval Architect to make a proper determination of the stability of the NORTH VOYAGEUR as there were no plans or diagrams available. There were no curves of form of the ship available or any other data that one could make actual determination of the G.M., that is, the metacentric height of the ship above the center of gravity so that it would be known whether she had positive or negative stability. We should like to know if Messrs. Campbell and Halkett had a diagram submitted to them at the time of their examination and if it is still available, we should like very much to have a copy of it. In the absence of any plan of the ship, can the surveyors inform us as to what the metacentric height of the ship was above the center of gravity.

In the event that efforts were made to pump the double bottom tanks dry, we should like to know if the surveyors from their examination can state whether there were any sounding tubes to port or to starboard. It appears that the pump suction may have been on the center line and if so, it could very well have sucked air and still left water in the tank if there was a list. We do not know whether the vessel had suction pipes to port or to starboard, and we shall greatly appreciate it if the surveyors can give us full information with respect to what equipment was present for the pumping of the tanks dry.



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The Principal Surveyor, (4)

We may say that our investigation has disclosed that there was no improper loading of the cargo and that the difficulties which were present were due to free water in the double bottom tanks, with no divisional bulkhead or if there was one, that it could not have been water-tight. Any information which Messrs. Campbell and Halkett can give us with respect to these inquiries, which we shall appreciate your presenting to them, will be most helpful in the preparation of our investigational report for submission to the Underwriters.

Thanking you for your kind co-operation.

Very truly yours,

MENDES & MOUNT,

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