

Oil Tanker "ALABAMA"

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Letters have been received from Mr. French, Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Richardson in explanation of the circumstances connected with the repairs effected to this vessel in Philadelphia and New York, and particularly in connection with the issue of subsequent certificates dealing with these repairs. These letters are replies to enquiries contained in the Secretary's letters dated 2nd January and 5th January, in which the Surveyors were requested to answer certain questions.

After the visit of the Owner and his London Representatives to this Office, on which occasion they discussed the matter with the Chairman, the Owner forwarded affidavits ~~from~~<sup>by</sup> the Master and ~~from~~<sup>by</sup> the Second Officer and Chief Engineer of the "ALABAMA", containing statements made before a notary in Italy, to the effect that the Master when he took over the vessel examined the decks and found no undulations at all, and declaring that these undulations came during the storm and that he was convinced that they were a consequence of the storm, and that he shewed them at the moment of arrival to Mr. White, the Surveyor of the Underwriters, to Mr. Silleman, who was representing the Owners, and to Representatives of the Society. The Second Officer and Chief Engineer, in their statements, say that the Master drew the attention of the above Representatives to the undulations on deck, telling them that the undulations had been caused by the cyclone.

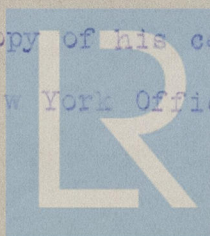
As these sworn declarations are in conflict with the statements contained in Mr. French's letter of the 8th December, to the effect that the Captain of the vessel is reported to have stated that these wavy deck plates had

existed prior to the damage in question being sustained; and are also in conflict with the further statement that Mr. Richardson had observed these slight wavings in the deck plating when the vessel arrived in New York for permanent repairs, and was likewise informed that they had existed before the damage for which the survey was called; Mr. French was asked to consult with the Surveyors and to state by whom the Captain was reported to have made the statements in question.

In the replies received, Mr. French says that he has been impressed by the unanimity of the statements of all concerned that, when the condition of this plating was observed, the Captain dismissed it as having no connection with the damage. While Mr. Buchanan does not deal explicitly with the point, Mr. Richardson in his communication says that he cannot say that any particular individual made either of the statements referred to, but that it was clearly understood between the English-speaking individuals present at the survey that no claim was being made for the wavy deck plating at that time. The Surveyors further state that they signed the certificates in good faith, believing that Mr. Silleman was acting as the Representative of the Owners - in which capacity he signed the document.

Mr. Richardson expresses regret that he did not personally consult Mr. French, and that he did not arrange for a copy of the certificate signed by him to be put through the usual channels. Mr. Buchanan states that he consulted Mr. Warbeth in regard to the propriety of the action proposed to him, and that they both concluded that Mr. Richardson had obtained the sanction of the Chief Surveyor. Mr. Buchanan does not explain why no copy of his certificate was forwarded either to the New York Office or to this Office.

*Ask for  
Explanation*



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Apart from the questions of procedure involved, there appears to be one point of critical importance which has emerged from this correspondence. The Master, Second Officer, and Chief Engineer make sworn statements to the effect that these undulations in the deck were produced as the result of the storm, and that they stated so on the occasion of the surveys. Mr. French now forwards a complete list of the damages to this vessel which, he states, was prepared by the Master at Philadelphia before the survey in dry dock. A list had previously been forwarded which contained references to articles of equipment and stores, but in this complete list - which has been examined - there are references to certain structural matters, but no reference whatever to the wavy deck plating. If this list was, in fact, prepared by the Master, the omission from it of any reference to wavy deck plating is difficult to explain as being consistent with the terms of the affidavits signed by the Ship's Officers.

It is submitted for consideration to what extent the Owner should be informed in regard to the above.

*Jue.*  
1.2.32  
*AB*



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