

MR. B. PESKETT, HAVRE

WRECK SECTION

No. 421

S/S "VARVASSI"

Full details of the circumstances of this case are set out in the endorsement of 23rd January, 1947, and briefly are:-

Mr. Peskett was requested to visit this vessel at Rouen to examine the main condenser, which was stated to have had a new water-end, tube plates and tubes.

On his arrival on board at 6 p.m., the condenser was closed up, full of water and the only item which could be verified as being renewed was the water-end.

The Chief Engineer stated that the above renewals had been carried out by the ship's staff, but Peskett could find no traces of old tubes, packing, etc. or any letters or papers dealing with the case, and gained the impression that he was being asked to issue a certificate for something he had not seen or had knowledge of. In his own interest and that of the Owners he refused. A heated argument ensued, as a result of which the Master reported Mr. Peskett as being "incoherent (drunk)".

Mr. Edwards, the Owners' agent in London, discussed the matter fully with Mr. Peskett in this Office. He indignantly refuted Peskett's suggestion that the Master, whom he has known for a long time, attempted to "pull wool" over Peskett's eyes, or that he would suggest anything not entirely straightforward.

Mr. Peskett related the extreme difficulties in which he is working at present and the practice of Agents requesting Surveyors to attend ships in ports involving long and difficult travel, to find on arrival that nothing has been prepared for survey or that the item is of such trifling character as not to warrant a visit from a Surveyor.

He had on that particular day carried out surveys in the forenoon in Havre, lunched en route to Rouen, and "VARVASSI" was his fourth ship in Rouen.

Mr. Edwards mentioned that he knew Agents in Northern France were not particularly helpful.

On the question of "incoherence" Mr. Edwards heard for himself the difficulty which Peskett has in making himself heard due to throat trouble, and which has necessitated him being examined (on Dr. Marriott's advice) by a throat specialist. After hearing the whole of the circumstances, Mr. Edwards agreed that it appeared to be a case of two very angry men, language difficulty (the Master apparently speaks English not too well) coupled with Peskett's difficulty in speech.

The question of working in difficult circumstances seems to be borne out by Dr. Marriott's insistence that, on account of his extremely run-down physical condition, Peskett must have rest in this country before returning to France.