

ENQUIRY INTO THE LOSS OF THE TUG "SECURITY"

As instructed, the undersigned attended the above Enquiry on various dates between the 10th and 21st January, 1949. The hearing concluded on the latter date, but the date of the finding is not yet announced.

The "SECURITY" was a Steam Tug built in 1904 and classed with the Society until taken over by the Admiralty. The class was allowed to lapse in 1908. The Tug having been purchased from the Admiralty by the Elliott Steam Tug Co. Ltd. she was reclassified "T100 A - for towing purposes" in 1931. During the war she was requisitioned by the Minister of War Transport, being managed on his behalf by William Watkins Ltd. She was returned to her Owners in August, 1944.

The Tug was lost on the 8th December, 1946, off Portland when, in association with the Tugs "CONTEST" and "WATERCOCK", she was towing the Anglo-Saxon Tanker "KELLETTIA" from Falmouth to the Tyne. The tow had left Falmouth on the previous day with a fresh following wind, but on the 8th December the wind backed to east of south, and the gale experienced was ^{stale & the} the heaviest which had been known for 30 years. The tow turned head to wind, the tugs and tanker acting as sea-anchors to each other while they awaited the subsiding of the gale. The "WATERCOCK'S" tow rope parted under the strain at about 4 p.m., this tug being on the starboard bow of the "KELLETTIA". For some reason unknown the Master of the "SECURITY" (towing on the port bow of the "KELLETTIA") gave orders to slip his tow rope, and shortly afterwards the "SECURITY" took a heavy list to port, from which she never recovered and disappeared below the water. The Master and three of the crew were lost.

The proceedings of the Enquiry are fully reported in the attached extracts from Lloyd's List, which are generally accurate. Evidence was often contradictory. On the fourth day of the Enquiry the second engineer, whose previous evidence had left the impression that the tug was in fair condition, was recalled, and proceeded to give quite a different picture. He stated that while scaling the sides of the crew space, not long before the final voyage, he had put his chipping hammer through the side plating below the waterline in way of a side-scuttle, that the steering engine was useless and should have been renewed as it kept jamming and had to be kicked to be restarted, and that water sometimes spurted into the crew space by way of slack bolts securing the belting.

Evidence was given by Mr. J.F. Nicholas, as to the condition of the tug when he carried out the 3rd Special Survey No. 3 in 1942, and by Mr. G. Young regarding his examination of the tug afloat in March, 1944, when a leak (due to corrosion) was found through the garboard strake on the port side under the boiler. After the insertion of a wood plug by a diver, and the fitting of a cement box, Mr. Young had issued an interim certificate valid for one month, subject to the tug being placed in drydock for permanent repairs on return to a north east coast port. The latter were carried out in Sunderland in April, 1944, under the supervision of Mr. P. Croudace, who was unfortunately prevented from attending the Enquiry by illness. Mr. Widgery gave evidence as to his examination of the tug in August, 1944, on the hard at Sun Wharf when the tug was returned to the Elliott Steam Tug Co.

Enquiry Into The Loss of the Tug "SECURITY"
(contd)

Mr. A.M. Jenkins gave evidence as to his survey of the tug in drydock in November, 1944, when the belting was renewed on the sides and stern of the ship.

Mr. E.M. Sellex gave evidence as to the Annual Load Line Survey of the ship held by him in 1946, and the undersigned gave evidence as to the significance of a Load Line Certificate, that the certificate of this tug was not endorsed in such a manner as to prevent her undertaking the voyage on which she was lost, and that on such a voyage she did not in fact require a Load Line Certificate, being engaged on coastal towing and being under 80 tons net register. He also explained the survey position so far as the Society was concerned.

It is difficult at this stage to forecast what the findings of the Court as to the cause of the loss of the tug will be, but it appears probable that after a possible breakdown of the steering engine she broached to, and that the sea pouring over the bulwarks and into the open fore-castle was there trapped by the pitching of the tug, and then poured down through the fidley doors which were admittedly kept open throughout the voyage. Had the fore-castle been provided at its after end with a bulkhead this could not have occurred.

It seems probable that the Court will take exception to the method of securing the belting to the hull of the ship. This was done by through-bolts passing through the wood belting and the shell-plating of the tug, so that any damage to the belting was likely to produce a leakage into the ship. This method, evolving from wood ship construction, was fairly common practice when this vessel was built in 1904. No provision is made in the Society's Rules respecting the method of securing wood belting.

The Owners are likely to be reprimanded for carrying out important repairs to the tug without calling in the Society's Surveyors: e.g. within a few months of the loss of the tug repairs had been carried out to a damaged stem, to the shell in the crew space where corroded through below a side-scuttle, and to belting bolts which had been started during the voyage to Falmouth. There may also be a question as to whether a tug of this age and condition was a suitable one to be used for an open sea tow of this nature in winter.

The Court has retained for reference the following original documents relating to this tug:

✓ London Rpts. 8 & 9 No. 110794	H. & M.	dated December, 1942
✓ Newcastle Rpt. 8 No. 102013	H	dated March, 1944
✓ Newcastle Rpt. C17892	Interim Certificate	dated March, 1944
✓ Sunderland Rpts. 8 & 9 No. 33926	H. & M.	dated April, 1944
✓ London Rpts. 8 & 9 No. 112113	H. & M.	dated August, 1944

They have also retained Mr. Croudace's medical certificate.

*At the conclusion of the Enquiry
Mr. Hewson, representing M.O.T. expressed
publicly his appreciation of Mr. Brydson's
assistance during the proceedings.*

27th January, 1949.

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

W311-0247

2/9

11/15

—



© 2019

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

TUG'S LOSS WHEN TOWING TANKER

Question of Suitability

"SECURITY" INQUIRY OPENED

A Ministry of Transport inquiry into the loss of the steam tug *Security*, which sank off Anvil Point, Dorset, on Dec. 8, 1946, was opened in London yesterday before Mr. Kenneth S. Carpmael, K.C., sitting as Commissioner of Wrecks.

The *Security*, with two other tugs, the *Contest* and *Watercock*, was towing the British tanker *Kelletia*, during a heavy gale when she capsized. Five survivors were picked up, but the master and three members of the crew were reported missing. Counsel for the Ministry raised the question as to the suitability of the tugs for the work. Sitting with Mr. Carpmael, as assessors, were Captain J. P. Thompson, Lieut.-Commander C. V. Groves, and Mr. E. F. Spanner.

Mr. J. B. Hewson represented the Ministry of Transport; Mr. R. F. Hayward, K.C., appeared for the owners of the *Kelletia*, the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, Ltd.; Mr. Waldo Porges for the owners of the tug *Watercock*, the Gamecock Steam Towing Company, Ltd.; and Mr. P. T. Bucknill for the owners of the *Security*. The owners of the *Security*, the Elliott Steam Tug Company, Ltd., London, applied to become parties to the inquiry, but none of the other interests represented did so.

Mr. HEWSON said the *Security* was a single-deck steam towing and salvage vessel, and was built in 1904 by Messrs. J. P. Rennoldson & Sons, of South Shields. The managers were Messrs. John Page and Harry Gould Page, of Fenchurch Street. Because of the fact that the *Security* had a flush fo'c'sle, she was probably better able to withstand heavy seas than the other two tugs engaged with her in towing the *Kelletia*. It might be found that the position of the fiddle doors was important. Should any seas hit the fo'c'sle head, these doors would be protected by the flush fo'c'sle, but should seas come in aft or abaft the beam and break on the fo'c'sle deck, they would be unlikely to free themselves perhaps as quickly as if the deck forward had been open.

The contract for the towing of the *Kelletia* was made between the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company and the Elliott Steam Tug Company, who, in addition to owning the *Security*, also owned the *Contest*, which was also engaged on the contract. The third tug engaged—the *Watercock*—was owned by the Gamecock Steam Towing Company, of London.

Mr. Hewson said the *Security*, before sailing from the Thames for Falmouth in November, 1946, had a plate welded on to her stern. She was not surveyed. She left the Thames on Nov. 18, 1946, and later had to shelter in Dover, together with the *Watercock*, and they remained about a week. During this time, there was a slight collision between the tugs, which ripped about 8 ft. off the *Security*'s wooden rubbing band and sheared six 3-in. bolts which kept the rubbing band in position. The damage was temporarily repaired and the vessel left Dover. She put into Newhaven and Portsmouth, because of bad weather, and, at Portsmouth, was found to have three tons of water under the cabin. The chief engineer expressed the opinion that this water probably came down the chain pipes from the fo'c'sle head.

TANKER MASTER'S DOUBTS

On arrival at Falmouth, the masters of the three tugs had a conference with the master of the *Kelletia*, who expressed the opinion that the tugs were not particularly suitable for the job of towing the *Kelletia* at that time of the year. Representations were made by the tug masters to the Elliott Steam Tug Company in London, and the same day instructions were sent by Mr. J. Lamb, of the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company to the master of the *Kelletia*, to proceed with the tow as arranged, taking no chances.

It had been arranged that the *Contest* should be in charge of the operation.

The master of the *Kelletia* decided to put to sea on Dec. 7. The wind was then from the west and was squally. There was little indication that the wind would become a head wind, as the vessel was being towed to the eastward. About 18 00 hours, there was broadcast a westerly gale warning, which was picked up the *Security*, but this was not passed on to the *Contest* because it was believed that nobody on board the *Contest* could read morse.

About 9 o'clock next morning, Dec. 8, the wind backed from the south-west and blew harder and stronger, turning into a southerly gale. This caused the tugs to head into the wind on a southerly course, and at the same time holding the *Kelletia* as best they could. About this time something described as "a runder plate" on the port side of the *Security*'s bunkers collapsed, and it was decided to work the coal only from the starboard side. There was water in the bilges, and it was increasing, but apparently it was not sufficient to cause alarm, as the crew seemed to think that a certain amount of water in the bilges was quite a natural thing. There was no difficulty in making steam.

It appeared from the *Kelletia*'s documents that the wind went round to south-east, reaching force 8. About noon the *Kelletia* attempted to communicate with the tugs as to the advisability of running for shelter, but without success, and no effort to run for shelter was made. The position of the flotilla at this time was about 11 miles from Portland Bill. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon the tow-rope of the *Watercock* carried away and the *Kelletia* sheered to port. It might be that this threw a greater burden on the tugs than they were able to withstand, and the *Security* in particular, which was towing on the port bow, had her power to manoeuvre greatly restricted by the greater weight put upon her. Shortly after this the master of the *Security* ordered his chief officer to stand by to slip the tow rope. Then the starboard quarter of the *Security* was struck by a heavy sea. Possibly, as a result of the lack of manoeuvrability, she listed heavily to port and sank shortly afterwards. At that time both the fiddle doors were open. The question was whether such tugs were suitable for such work in such weather.

MATE'S EVIDENCE

HARRY MCGEE, mate in the *Security*, said a piece of metal was welded on to the starboard side of the vessel because there were three cracks above the waterline, caused by a collision with a loaded lighter. There was no survey after the repair. The *Security*'s rubbing band was damaged when the swell in Dover Harbour threw the vessel against the *Watercock*.

McGee told Mr. Hewson there was always a leakage in the vessel's deck; water dripped constantly into his cabin. The chain pipes were stuffed with sacking to prevent water going into the chain locker. They were unable to say where the water came from that was found under the fore-cabin when in Portsmouth.

The COMMISSIONER criticised the fact that no further steps were taken to find where the water came from, or to have the vessel surveyed.

MCGEE said the fiddle doors were rarely closed, because they were inclined to darken the stokehold. He flashed a signal about a gale to the *Watercock*, but not to the *Contest*, as he did not think anybody on board the latter could read morse. The only signalling equipment in the *Security* was a set of international signal flags and a code book. At the time the *Watercock* broke her tow rope the *Security* was rolling badly. The *Kelletia* sheered to port, leaving the *Security* and the *Contest* on her starboard. The master ordered him to slip the tow rope, which he did, and shortly afterwards the vessel listed.

Pressed about this point, McGee said he was sure the vessel listed after the tow rope was slipped. He added that the vessel suddenly went over on her port side, with the water level with her flush deck. He tried to launch the starboard boat but could not do so. The ship went down almost immediately. He had no time to don a lifebelt. He was picked up after clinging to a floating box for half an hour. Witness advanced the opinion that the sudden list was caused by the shifting of coal in the main bunker, which had no shifting plates.

The inquiry was adjourned until to-day.

© 2019

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

W311-0247 3/9

LOSS OF "SECURITY" INQUIRY

Listed After Slipping Tow

TUG OFFICERS' EVIDENCE

The Ministry of Transport inquiry into the loss of the steam tug *Security*, which, while engaged with the tugs *Contest* and *Watercock* in towing the tanker *Kelletia*, sank off Anvil Point, Dorset, on Dec. 8, 1946, was continued in London yesterday, when evidence was given as to the condition of the tug by the mate, the chief engineer and second engineer. All three witnesses said that the tug took her list to port after the tow had been slipped. The inquiry is being conducted before Mr. Kenneth Carpmal, K.C., sitting as Wreck Commissioner, with Captain J. P. Thompson, Lieut.-Commander C. V. Groves and Mr. E. F. Spanner as assessors. The previous proceedings were reported in yesterday's *LLOYD'S LIST*.

Mr. J. B. Hewson represented the Ministry of Transport; Mr. R. F. Hayward, K.C., appeared for the owners of the *Kelletia*, the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, Ltd.; Mr. Waldo Porges for the owners of the tug *Watercock*, the Gamecock Steam Towing Company, Ltd.; and Mr. Peter Bucknill for the owners of the *Security*. The owners of the *Security*, the Elliott Steam Tug Company, Ltd., London, applied to become parties to the inquiry, but none of the other interests represented did so.

Continuing his evidence HARRY MCGEE, mate in the *Security* said, in reply to the Commissioner, that, after the *Watercock* had carried away her tow rope, the *Security* slewed round from southward to eastward. She was coming round to southward again, following an order to the engine-room crew to "give her all she's got," when she listed and then sank.

To Mr. Hewson, McGee said he did not think the sheering of the *Kelletia*, after the *Watercock* had carried away her tow rope, embarrassed the *Security* in any way.

Questioned by Mr. Bucknill, McGee confirmed that no tests of the vessel's seaworthiness were made after the plate was welded on to the stem. During the invasion of France, when the *Security* was taken over by the Admiralty, she had successfully withstood a gale. The water found under the fore cabin when the vessel reached Portsmouth was far too much to have been caused by the dripping through the deck.

When Mr. BUCKNILL suggested that McGee's evidence that three tons of water were found under the fore cabin was an exaggeration, McGee said that was the amount of water he had estimated. He would not agree that this water could have come down the chain pipes.

WHEN LIST OCCURRED

Mr. BUCKNILL pointed out that there were watertight bulkheads fore and aft of the flooded space. He pressed McGee to consider his evidence carefully concerning the listing of the vessel and the slipping of the tow. He pointed out that McGee's deposition, made about a month after the sinking, stated that the list occurred before the tow was slipped and that this was contrary to McGee's evidence to the Court—that the tow was slipped before the list occurred.

MCGEE assured the Court that the vessel listed after the tow was slipped.

Mr. BUCKNILL: Would you agree that the weather conditions were abnormal?—They were, definitely. When we arrived off Portsmouth we were told it was the worst gale for 30 years. Enormous seas were running.

Mr. Bucknill turned to McGee's suggestion that the coal in the main bunker shifted and caused the list.

MCGEE would not agree that the coal used—large seam coal—would not run easily. He had been told that this coal had run in the *Security* on a previous occasion.

Mr. BUCKNILL: That is only hearsay as far as you are concerned?—Yes.

Mr. HEWSON said he would like to pursue this matter further, but McGee could not remember who had told him.

EZEKIAH JOHN HILLS, chief engineer (uncertificated) of the *Security* at the time of her loss and for two years before, said that no tests were made for leakages after the plate was welded on to the stem in Gravesend. The *Security*, he said, had a watertight bulkhead between the forepeak and the crew space, but he had never had this tested. There was another bulkhead at the after end of the crew space. Between the cross bunker and the stokehold, there was a bulkhead with screw doors, which were "probably meant to be watertight years ago."

SOURCE OF LEAKAGE

Hills explained that the fender plate, referred to at the previous day's hearing, was a cast iron plate in front of the boiler to prevent ash and coal from going down into the bilges. He agreed that, when part of the rubbing band was broken off following the bumping together of the *Security* and the *Watercock* in Dover Harbour, he did nothing about it, except to look at it. Witness expressed the opinion that the water found under the fore cabin at Portsmouth had come down the chain pipes. He had seen water there before, but not so much.

Asked by the COMMISSIONER if he made an investigation to find where the water had come from, HILLS said he was more interested, at that time, in getting the water out.

To Mr. Hewson, he said the reason why he didn't look to see if there was any leak on the port side after the damage to the rubbing band was because the coal in the bunker was just inside that spot. Neither did he examine the rubbing band or the space under the forecabin when they entered Portsmouth. He repaired the rubbing band at Falmouth, but made no test.

Mr. Hewson: You, as chief engineer, made no test?—No, sir.

HILLS told the Commissioner that after loading more coal at Falmouth no trimming was done in the scuttles, but the cross bunker was trimmed. There were then about 50 tons of coal in the vessel.

Asked by Mr. Hewson why, although the bunker could take 60 tons of coal, the coal was right up the chute when 50 tons were in the bunker, Hills said: "They (the coaling contractor's men) wouldn't trim any more."

Hills told Mr. Hewson he was satisfied with the stowage of the coal in the *Security* at Falmouth. He agreed that he gave the trimmers no instructions.

Asked about the fender plate, he said that this gave way because of the sheering of a bolt when the vessel was rolling heavily. The sheering of the bolt was due, probably, to deterioration.

When this happened, he closed the port screw door of the bunker and told the engine-room crew to get the coal through the starboard screw door. At that time there was about a foot of water in the stokehold bilge. He thought this had come from the ash cock. Two of the stokehold plates were displaced by the water underneath, which was being tossed about by the rolling of the vessel. The water in the stokehold bilges was unable to get away. This was because the limber hole under the boiler, through which the water should pass to the engine-room bilge for pumping out, was choked with ash and coal, following the collapse of the fender plate.

Questioned further, Hills said that, on leaving Falmouth, the fiddley doors were open. They were always left open for ventilation.

SINKING OF VESSEL

Describing the sinking of the vessel, he said he had gone to his cabin for a rest and was trying to doze when he saw water coming into the cabin as the vessel rolled. He walked through the fiddley to where the men were trying to launch a boat. The vessel was then more than half over on her side. The tow rope had been slipped at that time. The vessel slid under the water seconds later, leaving him and the others in the water. He considered the vessel sank because she had shipped too much water on her port side in the bad weather prevailing. He did not think the list was caused by the coal shifting.

To Mr. Bucknill, Hills said that, so far as he was aware, the troubles with the rubbing band and the water under the fore cabin, found at Portsmouth, were not reported to the owners.

WILLIAM CHARLES CONNOLLY, second engineer in the *Security*, said he saw the plate being welded on the stem at Gravesend, and took no special interest in it. The amount of water under the forecabin, which was found when entering the Solent, was most unusual—about two feet. There had never been more than a few inches of water there before. Water seeped through the bolts holding the rubbing band, but only to a small extent. This did not become any worse after the rubbing band was damaged in Dover. He added that he took no particular interest in the Dover incident, because he was ashore at the time, attending to food supplies. He saw the coal being trimmed at Falmouth; it was trimmed level, but there was some coal in the chute.

Connolly told the Court that the tow rope was slipped before the mate said "Give her all she's got." Afterwards the vessel listed and sank.

To Mr. Bucknill, Connolly said that if the water had come down the chain pipes he would have seen it.

The inquiry adjourned until to-day.

© 2019

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

W311-0247 4/9

"SECURITY" INQUIRY**Tanker Master on Cause of
Tug's Sinking****"SHIPPED UNCONTROLLABLE
WATER"**

At the Ministry of Transport inquiry into the loss of the tug *Security*, which was continued in London yesterday, the master of the *Kelletia* (which the *Security*, together with the tugs *Con-test* and *Watercock*, was towing), in an affidavit, expressed the view that the cause of the sinking was that the *Security* shipped uncontrollable water and became unmanageable, in view of the enormous sea running. He stated the tugs were labouring very heavily, especially the *Security*. The inquiry is being conducted by Mr. Kenneth Carpmal, K.C., sitting as Wreck Commissioner, with Captain J. P. Thomson, Lieut.-Commander C. V. Groves and Mr. E. F. Spanner as assessors. The previous proceedings were reported in LLOYD'S LIST of Jan. 11 and 12.

Mr. J. B. Hewson represented the Ministry of Transport; Mr. R. F. Hayward, K.C., appeared for the owners of the *Kelletia*, the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, Ltd.; Mr. Waldo Porges for the owners of the tug *Watercock*, the Gamecock Steam Towing Company, Ltd.; and Mr. Peter Bucknill for the owners of the *Security*. The owners of the *Security*, the Elliott Steam Tug Company, Ltd., London, applied to become parties to the inquiry, but none of the other interests represented did so.

Chief Engineer EZEKIAH JOHN HILLS, recalled for cross-examination by Mr. Bucknill, said he had on occasions gone below the fore cabin but had not looked up at the chain locker. He repeated his belief that the water found under the fore cabin had actually come down the chain pipes. After leaving Portsmouth he saw a trickle of water coming from under the port side door of the cross bunker and he surmised that this had come from the spot where the rubbing band had been damaged at Dover. But after the rubbing band had been repaired in Falmouth, no more water seeped in at that spot.

To Mr. Hewson, Hills said he had never put the bilge pump on to the space under the bunkers after leaving Falmouth; neither did he pump water out of the space under the fore cabin after leaving Falmouth. The bolts with which he repaired the rubbing band at Falmouth were drawn from his own stores, and he was satisfied they were the correct size.

"BILGES BLOCKED"

CYRIL GEORGE DIX, fireman in the *Security*, said that on Dec. 8, 1946, he went on watch at 1 p.m. The weather was heavy but nothing to be afraid of. He was instructed to fire from the starboard door of the cross-bunker, because the fender plate was down on the other

side. There was water under the stokehold, which had displaced some of the plates. He formed the opinion that the bilges were blocked and that the stokehold plates were displaced by the water "sloshing about."

Describing the sinking of the vessel, Dix said that about 4 p.m. a heavy sea hit her. "She rolled over and I shot across the stokehold. She lay over and didn't seem to pick herself up. Then the water started pouring in through the fiddley doors. I went up on top, jumped on the gunwale and went over the side." He was picked up after an hour in the water. He could offer no reason why the vessel listed as she did.

To Mr. Bucknill, Dix said there was a "tidy drop" of water below the stokehold plates and he believed this was coming from the ash cock, as the limber hole was blocked.

To the Commissioner, Dix said some of the coal was in pieces weighing about 28 lb., which had to be broken up. There were also small pieces. The coal was dry. He thought that if the coal had taken a run to the port side he would have heard it, but he did not hear any such noise.

ROY ALFRED COOMBER, fireman in the *Security* for a year and nine months, said she was his first vessel. On a previous voyage from Gravesend to Newcastle they had had a pretty rough trip, but he could not say if any water had come in under the fore cabin. After the vessel left Falmouth on her last trip, he heard no water under the fore cabin. The stokehold plates that shifted had been held in position by the fender plate before it collapsed. The pitching and rolling of the vessel, helped by the water underneath, shifted the plates.

Telling of the sinking of the vessel, Coomber said he had been in the cabin trying to sleep. When the door in the cabin banged, he got up and found water in the port side alleyway. The ship turned over and he found himself in the water.

To the Commissioner, Coomber said the bilges were partly cleaned out at Dover and again at Portsmouth, but not at Falmouth. On the way to Falmouth, ash and small coal could have entered the bilges, because there was a hole in one of the fender plates, which was patched only with wood. This could have been burned away.

Coomber was questioned closely by Mr. Hewson about his deposition, made in April, 1947, in which he stated that the pumps were choked by loose ash. He told the Court he left the engine-room after putting the pump hose into the bilge and had only assumed that the pump had choked because he had seen ash floating in the bilge. He had not seen the pump choke, but had heard the steam shut off and said to himself: "The pump must have choked."

To Mr. Bucknill, Coomber said a considerable amount of water was used to damp down the ashes, and this could have accounted for the water in the bilge.

Mr. Hewson put in an affidavit made by the master of the *Kelletia*, Capt. Douglas Bathol Edgar, who is now a pilot with the Torres Straits Pilot Service. In this Capt. Edgar said he did not consider the three tugs suitable for the voyage, and the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum company's engineer superintendent at Falmouth, Mr. T. G. Christie, held the same opinion. The masters of the tugs had told him of the hazardous voyage they had had from London to Falmouth, but they felt they were quite capable of taking on the job of towing the vessel, although they did not seem happy about having to do so. Mr. Christie had contracted London and received a reply from Mr. Lamb asking Capt. Edgar to proceed on the voyage and take no chances, no matter how long it took. Mr. Lamb had said he would try to arrange for a larger tug to meet the *Kelletia* in The Downs, to tow her to the Tyne.

Capt. Edgar considered that in view of their total horsepower, the three tugs should have been quite capable of doing the job. "It was obvious to any seaman that the tugs were labouring very heavily, particularly the *Security*, which at times could hardly be observed at all in the seaway," Capt. Edgar stated. In his opinion, the cause of the sinking was that, in view of the enormous sea running at the time, the *Security* probably rolled to such a degree that she shipped uncontrollable water and was then unmanageable.

EXCEPTIONAL WEATHER

He was told by the surviving tugmasters at Southampton that they had never experienced such weather conditions. One of the tugmasters said he considered himself very lucky to be afloat, as he had taken considerable quantities of water below. "The tugmasters carried out their duty with great ability, particularly the tugmaster who turned his vessel in an endeavour to pick up any survivors of the *Security*, which I consider a very brave act under the weather conditions prevailing," the affidavit ended.

Mr. JOHN FRANCIS NICHOLAS, ship and engine surveyor to Lloyd's Register of Shipping at Southampton, said he made the third special survey of the *Security* in November, 1942. He considered the vessel fit then to remain in service in her class.

Mr. ALEXANDER M. JENKINS, ship surveyor to Lloyd's Register at London, said he surveyed the *Security* afloat and in dry dock in October and November, 1944, before and after repairs had been done.

Evidence of another survey was given by Mr. EDWARD M. SELLEX, engineer surveyor, and Mr. SIDNEY TURNER BRYDEN, a Principal Surveyor of Lloyd's Register, explained the significance of a freeboard certificate. The inquiry adjourned until to-day.



© 2019

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

W311-0247 5/9

"SECURITY" INQUIRY

Tanker Co.'s Evidence on Towing Arrangements

QUESTION OF TUGS' HORSE-POWER

The Ministry of Transport inquiry into the loss of the tug *Security*, which sank off Anvil Point, Dorset, on Dec. 8, 1946, while engaged, with the tugs *Contest* and *Watercock*, in towing the tanker *Kelletia*, was continued in London yesterday, when evidence was given as to the arrangements made for towing by officials of the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, particularly in regard to the horse-power of the tugs. Subsequently criticism of the condition of the *Security* was made by the master of the *Watercock*. The inquiry is being conducted by Mr. Kenneth Carpmael, K.C., sitting as Wreck Commissioner, with Captain J. P. Thomson, Lieut.-Commander C. V. Groves and Mr. E. F. Spanner as assessors. The previous proceedings were reported in LLOYD'S LIST of Jan. 11, 12 and 13.

Mr. J. B. Hewson represented the Ministry of Transport; Mr. R. F. Hayward, K.C., appeared for the owners of the *Kelletia*, the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, Ltd.; Mr. Waldo Porges for the owners of the tug *Watercock*, the Gamecock Steam Towing Company, Ltd.; and Mr. Peter Bucknill for the owners of the *Security*. The owners of the *Security*, the Elliott Steam Tug Company, Ltd., London, applied to become parties to the inquiry, but none of the other interests represented did so.

Mr. JOHN LAMB, chief marine superintendent to the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company at the time of the incident, the first witness called yesterday, said that before going to the West Indies he gave instructions for the towage to take place. The actual arrangements were made in his absence, though he returned before the towage started. He assumed that everything was in order, but satisfied himself as to the number of tugs and their power. He was told by Captain Golds, head of the company's nautical section, of the condition of the weather at Falmouth, and refused to allow the tow to proceed. Later he was being pressed to let the ship proceed, and he asked Captain Golds to get a weather report from the Meteorological Office. On receipt of the weather forecast, he gave instructions for the tow to proceed.

TUGS "ANXIOUS TO START"

Asked where the pressure had come from, Mr. Lamb said he understood the tugs had been at Falmouth for a day or two, and that the tug masters were getting restive, and wanted to get on with that job or another job. He was not being pressed to get the *Kelletia* to the Tyne because, so far as the owners of the *Kelletia* were concerned, the matter was left entirely to him.

The COMMISSIONER: It sounds more like tug owners' pressure.

Mr. LAMB: On that I am not at all clear.

Mr. BUCKNILL: Are you sure about your statement that the tug masters were getting restive?

Mr. LAMB: Perhaps the word is not the most suitable, but I had the feeling that they were anxious to proceed and that I was the one who was preventing them from doing so.

He added that he was not aware of the conditions of the contract as this was handled by the company's shipping department.

Captain SIDNEY F. GOLDS, nautical superintendent to the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, said he arranged with the Elliott Steam Tug Company for the towage of the *Kelletia*. At that particular time, tugs were very hard to get. He said he wanted three tugs of about a thousand horsepower each. Elliott's said they had two tugs each of 1200 h.p. and one of 800 h.p. Before he signed the contract he was given the names and power of the tugs to be employed. He was given the horse-power of the tugs as: *Contest*, 1000; *Security*, 1000; and *Watercock*, 800. He had made no actual office record of the horse-power of the tugs.

The COMMISSIONER: "If anything had happened to you—you could have been run over—how was anybody else to know what was going on?"

Captain GOLDS said he was quite satisfied the tugs were suitable for the job. (Earlier evidence given to the inquiry was that the horse-power of the tugs engaged on the tow were:—*Contest*, 1150; *Watercock*, 750; *Security*, 700.)

To Mr. Hewson he said the weather report he received from the Meteorological Office said: "Fine weather; light to moderate westerly winds." On this information he was satisfied to let the tow proceed.

After Mr. Christie (engineer superintendent of the Anglo-Saxon Company at Falmouth) had phoned him from Falmouth, he rang Mr. Lister, of the Gamecock Steam Towing Company (owners of the *Watercock*), who said he had purposely sent the *Watercock* to do the job as she was "a good seagoing craft." Witness could not remember if he had contacted the Elliott Company at that time.

Asked about the message given to the *Kelletia* that a larger tug would meet the vessel in The Downs, Captain Golds said he gave this information because Mr. Page, of the Elliott Company, had told him they would probably require the *Security* for a job in the Thames, and that a larger tug would be sent in her place. He did not ask for a larger tug, as he was satisfied with the three tugs already engaged for the job.

Captain Golds agreed with Mr. Bucknill that it might well have been that in his preliminary conversation with Mr. Page he asked for two tugs of 1000 h.p. each. He agreed, too, that he was told the *Contest* was 1150 h.p., but reasserted that he was told the *Security* was 1000 h.p. But had he been told the *Security* was only 700 h.p., he would still have accepted her. To his knowledge no pressure was made by the Elliott Company to get the tow under way.

ARTHUR FREDERICK COUBES, master of the *Watercock*, said there was water under the fore cabin of his vessel at Gravesend, which, he thought, came from the chain locker. At Dover, two tons of water was found in the same place. He could find no reason for this, but thought it might be due to a badly caulked rivet. This trouble did not recur. After the *Security* had bumped the *Watercock* in Dover Harbour, he saw part of the *Security*'s rubbing band in the water.

"A DIFFICULT JOB"

Coubes added that, when the tug masters were asked for their horse-powers, the master of the *Security* said: "Originally it was 750, but some of the horses are dead; she is not as good as she used to be." The vessel was over 40 years old. When the master of the *Kelletia* asked them what

they thought of the job, he (Coubes) gave the opinion that it was as much as they could do in such weather conditions. The *Kelletia*'s master then said that, from his experience of the East Coast, he did not think the tugs were capable of making the tow at that time of the year. "We agreed it would be a difficult job," said Coubes, "but I couldn't say I would not do the job; if I did, somebody else would come along and say he would do it."

At the time the *Watercock*'s tow rope carried away, the seas were at their highest. Shortly afterwards, he noticed the *Security* coming towards him and diving into the sea. He thought she had broken adrift. Prior to that and throughout the tow, the *Security* had appeared to be shipping less water than the *Watercock* or the *Contest*. From the time he began to think there was something wrong with the *Security*, she rolled to port five times before she settled down and disappeared. The last part of her he saw was her starboard side. It was all over in three minutes. The *Watercock* picked up the survivors.

When asked if he had anything to add to his deposition, that the vessel was lost through stress of weather, Coubes said the *Security* was loaded with coal in half cwt. and three-quarter cwt. lumps. Similar coal, loaded in the *Watercock*, was found to be jammed in the wings of the bunkers when she reached Portland, after the incident. The coal had to be pulled down from the wings, and it fell to the floor with a clatter. It did no damage to the *Watercock*, but if the same thing happened in the *Security* it would damage her, because of her condition.

"SECURITY'S" CONDITION

Asked what he meant by this reference to the condition of the *Security*, Coubes said that prior to the *Security* leaving the Thames one of the crew was chipping paint off the inside of the fore cabin on the starboard side and his hammer went through the hull. This was plugged because the hole was below the waterline, but the plug would not stop up the hole, as the plate went out more. A patch about one foot by nine inches was put on at Gravesend. Because of this, no more chipping was done up to the time the vessel was lost.

Asked where he got this information, Coubes said the hull was the subject of general conversation between the survivors. Pressed to name his informant, he said it was the second engineer, Connolly. Coubes went on to say that when in shallow water at Newhaven the *Security* was lying over on her side, and water in a stream as thick as his thumb ran out of a hole in the rubbing band on the port quarter. This water was running from a tank in the vessel.

On one occasion when he was on board the vessel, he remarked to the master that the lavatory was in rather an exposed position, and the master told him he was likely to have a shower if he went in there, as water was coming through a cracked hawse-pipe above the rubbing band. Coubes also told the Court that, after he had entered Dover harbour, the *Security*, following behind, headed towards the breakwater. The master told him afterwards that he could not get his steering gear over. It was, apparently, something to do with the control valve. The master said: "It often does that, but give her a kick and she goes."

Questioned at some length by Mr. Bucknill, Coubes agreed he was very critical of the *Security*, and said he felt it was his duty to express this criticism. He formed the opinion, on the voyage to Falmouth, that the *Security* was not suitable in her condition for the job they had in hand. She was the kind of tug he would not go to sea in.

Mr. BUCKNILL suggested that Coubes did not form his adverse opinion of the *Security* until after he had had conversations with the survivors, but Coubes would not agree that this was true.

WILLIAM CHARLES CONNOILLY, second engineer in the *Security*, recalled, was asked about the steering gear. He said that, at times, it jammed up through the control column. This happened two or three times a year and reports were made to the superintendent. The matter was attended to, but it was "never any good." Asked about the steering engine, he replied: "It was useless, as far as I am concerned." At times, when the wheel was put hard over, it jammed. He confirmed Coubes' evidence that in the summer of 1946, while chipping the ship's side in the fore cabin, his hammer went right through. The plates were very rusty, and at the spot where the hammer went through the plate were like a bit of paper. He put a piece of wood in the hole to plug it and when he hit it with a hammer it enlarged the hole and went right through. The superintendent was informed, and, sometime afterwards, a thin plate, about a foot square, was welded on. To his knowledge there was no survey after this repair. He did no further chipping. He added that throughout the time he was in the ship water came out through the bolt holes in the rubbing band, both port and starboard, every time the aftertank was filled and the vessel was on the hard.

The inquiry was adjourned until to-day.



© 2019

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

"SECURITY" INQUIRY

Ministry to Ask for Finding Against Owners

"CONTEST" MASTER'S EVIDENCE ON "WORST GALE"

The Ministry of Transport inquiry into the loss of the tug *Security* was continued in London yesterday, when it was announced that it was the Ministry's intention to ask the Court to find the owners in default. Earlier the master of the *Contest* (also owned by the Elliott Company) described how he saw the *Security* "slip under" in weather which he stated was "the worst gale I have ever been towing in." The *Security* sank off Anvil Point, Dorset, on Dec. 8, 1946, while engaged, with the tugs *Contest* and *Watercock*, in towing the Anglo-Saxon tanker *Kelletia*. Mr. Kenneth Carpmal K.C., is sitting as Wreck Commissioner, with Captain J. P. Thomson, Lieut.-Commander C. V. Groves and Mr. E. F. Spanner as assessors. It was the fifth day of the inquiry, the previous proceedings being reported in LLOYD'S LIST of Jan. 11, 12, 13 and 14.

Mr. J. B. Hewson represented the Ministry of Transport; Mr. R. F. Hayward, K.C., appeared for the owners of the *Kelletia*, the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, Ltd.; Mr. Waldo Porges for the owners of the tug *Watercock*, the Gamecock Steam Towing Company, Ltd.; and Mr. Peter Bucknill for the owners of the *Security*. The owners of the *Security*, the Elliott Steam Tug Company, Ltd., London, applied to become parties to the inquiry, but none of the other interests represented did so.

CHARLES EDWARD PARKER, master of the *Contest*, said he had 28 years' experience as a tug master, having joined the Elliott Company 40 years ago. From 1927 to 1932 he had been in command of the *Security*, in which he was continually making tows—in winter and summer from the North-East Coast of Scotland to the West Coast of Scotland, to Vigo, to the Channel Islands and Ireland. The *Security* was always reckoned to be the finest sea boat sailing out of London as a tug.

Asked about a previous occasion on which the *Security* took a list, Parker said he was towing the destroyer *Tormentor* to Liverpool, and, after rounding Land's End, ran into a heavy gale and snow storm. A heavy sea ran aboard the *Security*, clearing everything from the deck and filling the port alleyway. Though the sea ran aboard on her port quarter, it could just as well have been her starboard quarter. The vessel lay "pretty well over on her side." He got from the wheelhouse to the flying bridge, put the vessel full speed ahead and got her round head to wind.

Asked about the coal which the vessel then carried, Parker said it was steam coal of average size, but not much, as he had been about six days out. There was no movement of the coal in the bunkers. He had never had a shift of coal in the *Security* and did not experience a list on any other occasion.

Mr. HEWSON: Have you got any complaints to make about the *Security* as a sea-going tug?—None whatever.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR NAVIGATION

When PARKER said he had been put in charge of the tow and considered himself responsible for the actual navigation, the COMMISSIONER asked: "Supposing you had received an order from the master of the *Kelletia*, would you have carried it out?" PARKER answered: "Not if I didn't think it was prudent."

The COMMISSIONER: If he told you to make for shelter, would you have disregarded that?—No, sir; the master of the *Kelletia* always had the last word.

To Mr. Hewson, PARKER said that, after leaving Falmouth, the weather improved until daylight next morning. They were making good headway—about seven miles an hour.

Parker agreed that the master of the *Kelletia* had questioned the ability of the tugs to make the tow, and he (Parker) had told him he alone had towed a larger tanker, fully loaded, from the Isle of Wight to Grange-mouth. The tug he used was the *Challenge*, a sister ship of the *Contest*.

After midnight on Dec. 7, the weather became a flat calm. The barometer had fallen quite a bit. The wind was south-west and the weather was not bad. At that time, he had no doubts about future weather. The wind had not backed before he left the bridge at 5 a.m. About 7 30 a.m. he felt movement in the ship and he went on the bridge again. The glass had gone back a bit more. The weather was then squally, the wind had backed to southward, and he altered course slightly. The wind was then a little abaft the beam and each tug was shipping water, having the wind on the starboard side abaft the beam. By about 9 30 the wind was "getting up a bit." He then steered south for an hour or more, as near as possible to the wind.

Parker told Mr. Hewson that if, on that morning, the master of the *Kelletia* had suggested going to shelter, he (Parker) would have realised there was no shelter into which they could go. The *Kelletia* flew two flags during the day, but, in the bad visibility and with the fly of the flags, it was impossible to read the message.

In the afternoon, the wind increased, with more rain, and the *Contest* shipped a lot of water. When the *Watercock* broke adrift there was no noticeable effect on the *Kelletia*; she was just veering about a bit. But an additional strain was put on the *Security* and the *Contest*, and they were making no headway. At this time, the *Security* was making the best weather; in fact, two deckhands had been able to go aft to put fresh strapping on the "chaffing." The *Contest* was then shipping heavy water over the bow, but the *Security* was taking very little water, as she was built up forward.

"The first thing I saw was the *Security* slipping her tow rope," said Parker. "And as she slipped, she started to come up by the *Contest*. She came quite close to me. As she got clear of me, she seemed to lay over with a bit of a list to port. She took another sea and lay over, and I said 'she is not going to recover.' She then took another big sea and slipped under."

Asked by the Commissioner what he thought of the weather at the time, Parker said: "It was at times a hurricane; I think it was the worst gale I have ever been towing in."

Mr. JOHN GEORGE CHRISTIE, senior engineering superintendent to the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, based on Falmouth, said that at the conference with the master of the *Kelletia* and the tug masters he expressed the opinion that the *Security* and the *Watercock* were too small in size to take the *Kelletia* around the coast. The tug masters concerned were peeved and said they had towed larger vessels around the coast. They showed no reluctance whatever to get on with the job. The master of the *Kelletia* also thought the *Security* and *Watercock* were too small.

Mr. Christie said he was satisfied with the horsepower of the tugs, but not with their size. He contacted Captain Golds (nautical superintendent to the Anglo-Saxon Company) in London, who rang him later on to say that, in the opinion of the tug owners and of Mr. Lamb, the tugs were suitable for the job and that they should carry on. He agreed he wrote to the master of the *Kelletia* telling him of the instructions received from London—to proceed with the tow as soon as the weather was favourable, to take no chances and not to hurry.

CHARLES HENRY COTTER, chief officer of the *Kelletia* at the time of the incident, said that at the conference with the tug masters and Mr. Christie, the master of the *Kelletia* considered the *Security* and *Watercock* too small for the job. The age of the *Security* was mentioned also. He remembered the master of the *Security*, when speaking of the horse-power of his vessel, saying: "Some of the horses are dead."

After Cotter was questioned concerning barometer readings, which, he said, he "could not remember," Mr. HAYWARD said that Cotter first made a statement to the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company's solicitors on Oct. 31, 1947—10 months after the sinking. Cotter said it was 12 months after the sinking that he was asked to make a deposition for the Receiver of Wreck.

"KELLETTIA'S" SIGNALS UNANSWERED

To Mr. Hewson, he said that signals made by the *Kelletia* to the tugs by flags and Aldis lamp—asking "Are you going to shelter?" were not answered. When the *Watercock's* tow rope parted, it was hove on board the *Kelletia* within 20 minutes. After that they were doing quite well with the other two tugs towing when the *Security* forged ahead of the *Contest*; but he did not see her tow rope part. He had been trying to contact the *Watercock* by Aldis lamp. The *Kelletia* suggested pouring oil overboard to smooth the sea, so that the *Watercock* could come alongside and resecure the tow. Each word was answered by the answering sign from the *Watercock*. At this time the *Kelletia* was yawing and he did not actually see what happened to the *Security* after her tow parted. When they had the information that the *Security* had sunk, the *Kelletia* slipped the *Security's* tow line, leaving it in the sea.

Describing incidents that happened just before the *Security* sank, Painter said that when his attention was drawn to the vessel she was making for the *Contest*. The *Security* had a list to port, at that time, caused by the sea; and her tow line was still fast. He did not actually see her go down.

HERBERT ALLEN, a member of the runner crew in the *Kelletia*, said he saw the *Security* take a heavy sea on her starboard bow which sent her over

to port. The man at the wheel was "shot" out of the wheelhouse. The vessel came back, loaded with water, and she then took another list and sank. He believed the tow rope was fast at the time, but was not certain of that.

Mr. Hewson told the Commissioner that it was the intention of the Ministry to ask the Court to find that the loss of the *Security* was caused or contributed to by the wrongful act, or default, of the registered manager or the owners of the vessel.

EDWARD HENRY TALL, who was called by Mr. Bucknill, said he was master of the *Security* from 1937 to 1945. He was at present master of the *Contest*. When in the *Security* he did seaway, including a towing job from London to Inverness, and another from Swansea to London. On "D" day he towed bridges for the Mulberry harbour across the Channel. When he left the *Security* she was in good condition. The steering gear had been repaired in 1944, and gave no more trouble.

To Mr. Hewson, Tall said that the *Security* never shipped water, even in a hurricane, and never took a list. But she was a heavy roller.

The inquiry was adjourned until Monday.



© 2019

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

"SECURITY" INQUIRY

Evidence on Repairs Effected

COUNSEL'S SUGGESTION OF FREE WATER IN VESSEL

When the Ministry of Transport inquiry into the loss of the tug *Security* was resumed in London yesterday, the second week of the inquiry, the repairer and the tug owner's superintendent were questioned regarding the stem repairs. After evidence was given by the assistant manager, Counsel for the Ministry began his address. He thought that the evidence suggested that there must have been considerable free water in the vessel, which would have affected her stability. The *Security* was lost off Anvil Point, Dorset, on Dec. 8, 1946, when, with the tugs *Contest* and *Watercock*, she was engaged in towing the Anglo-Saxon tanker *Kelletia*. The inquiry is being conducted by Mr. Kenneth Carpmael, K.C., sitting as Wreck Commissioner, with Captain J. P. Thomson, Lieut.-Commander C. V. Groves and Mr. E. F. Spanner as assessors. The previous proceedings were reported in LLOYD'S LIST of Jan. 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15.

Mr. J. B. Hewson represented the Ministry of Transport; Mr. R. F. Hayward, K.C., appeared for the owners of the *Kelletia*, the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, Ltd.; Mr. Waldo Porges for the owners of the tug *Watercock*, the Gamecock Steam Towing Company, Ltd.; and Mr. Peter Bucknill for the owners of the *Security*. The owners of the *Security*, the Elliott Steam Tug Company, Ltd., London, applied to become parties to the inquiry, but none of the other interests represented did so.

Mr. RONALD D. Cook, director and manager of the Clifton Slipways Company, Ltd., Gravesend, said he received a telephone message, stating that the *Security* was coming in for repairs to "slight damage" to her stem. He found that the stem bar had been set back, splitting the stem plates in the way of three rivets. The splits were V'd and welded and a stem shoe fitted in the way of the defect. This was about 3 ft. in length and extending 9 in. each side of the stem. It was electrically welded. As a precautionary measure a cement box was placed inside in the way of the repairs. In his opinion the *Security* was "quite a seaworthy vessel."

He added that he had previously made a small repair to the steering gear. The only trouble he found was that the trunnion bearings of the cylinders were prone to give a certain amount of trouble, though not to the point of being dangerous. He considered the statement made by a previous witness—that the steering engine was useless—as "most unfair" and "literally untrue." The loss of the fender plate, he said, would have no bearing at all on the firing of the boilers.

REQUIRED SURVEY

To Mr. Hewson, he said it was the usual policy of his firm to hose-test vessels after making repairs to the hull but he could not say if that was done with the *Security*, as the men who had done the repairs had since left the firm. He agreed that the repairs to the stem were of a type which required a Lloyd's survey, but said he had not mentioned this to Mr. Falder (superintendent to

the Elliott Steam Tug Company at the time), as he thought this was hardly the responsibility of the repairers. He asserted that the repairs he had done to the vessel were "quite orthodox."

Asked by Mr. Hewson why he considered the vessel seaworthy, WITNESS said he formed this opinion from his experience. But he admitted that he had not gone over the vessel.

Mr. JOSEPH FALDER, superintendent to the Elliott Steam Tug Company, said his qualifications were "practical knowledge and experience." He had been a foreman-engineer in the London Graving Dock Company, and worked in a similar capacity for various firms. The repair made to the stem of the *Security* was, in his opinion, "a very fine job."

Asked by the COMMISSIONER if the vessel had a water test after the stem repair, FALDER said such a test would have been a farce, as the workmen on the job could have "faked" a leaking rivet.

The COMMISSIONER asked Falder if this could have been prevented by good supervision, but was not satisfied with Falder's answer. After pressing Falder for several minutes to answer the question, the Commissioner said: "If you won't answer the question we will continue."

To Mr. Bucknill, FALDER said he was 82 years old. When he left the firm he burned all his notebooks, as he considered them his private property. He had no records now, and there were certain details he could not remember.

STEERING GEAR'S FREEDOM FROM TROUBLE

Falder described the steering engine as "a very wonderful engine." In his 20 years with the company the *Security's* steering gear gave less trouble than that of any other tug. He recalled that on one occasion he had had the trunnions rebbed. He denied that Second Engineer Connolly had ever told him that the steering engine was useless.

A suggestion by Mr. Hewson that the *Security* leaked so much that she was known as the "watering can" was dismissed by Falder as "firemen's talk." He admitted that although he knew that the vessel was going on a deep-sea job he did not call for a survey.

Referring to repairs to the shell while the vessel was in the service of the Ministry of War Transport, the COMMISSIONER asked if, when the ship was handed back to the owners, their attention was drawn to anything that had been done to her.

Mr. HEWSON said this would be unlikely; the vessel would be in dry dock and would have been returned in good repair.

The COMMISSIONER agreed that that may be the practice, but was it the proper practice?

Mr. Hewson undertook to consider this question.

To Mr. Hewson, FALDER said that, at the off-survey, when the vessel was returned to the owners, he was concerned to see that she was in as good a condition as when she was passed into Government service. He was not satisfied with her condition when she was handed back in 1944. There were several possible small repairs for which he wanted the vessel "opened up," but Mr. Nimmo, of the Ministry,

would not agree to this. Falder was unable to produce a list of these items, but remembered some of them concerned the engine and condenser. He had, he said, posted the list to the Elliott Company.

The COMMISSIONER asked Mr. Bucknill to have this investigated.

Falder agreed that the fact that the chipping hammer went through the shell indicated that the plate was deteriorated, but maintained that it was purely local. Had he known of any other deterioration in the side plates or bottom plating, he would have hammer tested all the plates before letting the vessel undertake sea-towage.

Mr. ALFRED JOHN PAGE, said that at the time of the sinking, he was assistant manager to the Elliott Steam Tug Company. It was the company's normal practice to blow each tug down for boiler cleaning every six months, and they were laid by for ten days or a fortnight while the maintenance repairs were done. The last time this was done to the *Security* was about September, 1946.

CONTRACT DISCUSSION

When the contract for the tow was discussed, he and Captain Golds, of the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, were considering the matter on the basis of two tugs. Eventually, Captain Golds said his company was of the opinion that three tugs should be employed. Mr. Page said he received no report of the trouble at Dover—where the *Security* had her rubbing band damaged. The master of the *Contest*, Captain Parker, who was in charge of the towing operation and responsible to the master of the *Kelletia*, told him on the 'phone he was quite happy in carrying on with the job. But even so, he told Parker to take no chances, to take his time and make a safe job of it.

About the criticisms of the vessel given in evidence, Mr. Page said he had no complaints from the crew concerning the condition of the plating. To the best of his belief it was in good condition. He went on board the vessel twice, but Connolly (the second engineer) had never complained to him about the water coming into the crew space or about the bilge pumps sucking air because of a rust-perforated pipe.

He added that the *Security*, at the time of her loss, was insured for £12,000, which was paid. No extra premium was required for the last voyage.

To Mr. Bucknill, he said he had no doubts that it was safe to send the tugs on the voyage.

He agreed, when asked by Mr. Hewson, that at the time of the voyage he was aware that the *Security* was due, during the next 12 months, for her fourth No. 1 Special Survey. He would not have sent the vessel to sea if he had known the steering gear or bilge pump was ineffective. He received no report of the vessel having made any water on the voyage from Gravesend to Falmouth.

When the Commissioner questioned Mr. Page about the notebooks burned by Mr. Falder when he left the Elliott Company at the end of December, 1946, Mr. Page said there was a certain amount of feeling between Mr. Falder and the company at that time, and, in any case, it was not thought that Mr. Falder had any documents or information which was the property of the company.

Mr. Hewson then began his address to the Court, although two more witnesses are to be called to-day. He pointed out that they now had stronger threads in their hands than when the inquiry opened. He recalled the evidence that the steering gear was erratic, but added that there was no evidence of further trouble with the steering gear later in the voyage. They had had evidence that a chipping hammer had gone through the shell, and there was no evidence that the owners or the superintendent had taken any steps to see that this did not happen in another place.

Something they did know, however, was that there was a leakage into the space below the fore cabin which amounted to something more than weeping when the ship was at sea in heavy weather—a leakage through the bolt holes around the rubbing band. Another fact known to the Court was that when a substantial amount of water was found in her at Portsmouth she was pumped out with the pump which was seldom used—the salvage pump. But, here again, they reached somewhat of a dead end, because there was no evidence that the ship made water again in the same place. "Things seemed to have happened on this ship once on this voyage, and there is no evidence they happened again," said Mr. Hewson.

He stressed the fact that, before the sinking, the master of the *Security* ordered the mate to let go the tow, and suggested that the Court might consider what caused the master to give this order.

There was evidence, he said, that there was free water in the ship—possibly more than they had heard of in evidence—because it had happened on the way down in bad weather. They knew that there were sources of leakage in the ship and that the weather was worse on the way eastward than it was on the way westward, and that there must have been considerable free water in the ship, which would have had a deleterious effect on her stability.

The inquiry adjourned until to-day.



© 2019

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

"SECURITY" INQUIRY**Counsel's Submission for Owners****NO EVIDENCE OF UNDUE LEAKAGE**

At the Ministry of Transport inquiry into the loss of the tug *Security*, which was continued in London yesterday, further evidence was taken in regard to surveys of the vessel after which Counsel addressed the Court. For the owners it was submitted that there was no evidence of any undue leaks. The *Security* was lost off Anvil Point, Dorset, on Dec. 8, 1946, when, with the tugs *Contest* and *Watercock*, she was engaged in towing the Anglo-Saxon tanker *Kelletia*. The inquiry is being conducted by Mr. Kenneth Carmichael, K.C., sitting as Wreck Commissioner, with Captain J. P. Thomson, Lieut.-Commander C. V. Groves and Mr. E. F. Spanner as assessors. The previous proceedings were reported in *Lloyd's List* of Jan. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 18.

Mr. J. B. Hewson represented the Ministry of Transport; Mr. R. F. Hayward, K.C., appeared for the owners of the *Kelletia*, the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, Ltd.; Mr. Waldo Porges for the owners of the tug *Watercock*, the Gamecock Steam Towing Company, Ltd.; and Mr. Peter Bucknill for the owners of the *Security*. The owners of the *Security*, the Elliott Steam Tug Company, Ltd., London, applied to become parties to the inquiry, but none of the other interests represented did so.

Mr. A. M. Jenkins, ship surveyor to *Lloyd's Register* at London, who surveyed the *Security* in 1944, recalled, said his examination consisted of visual examination of the plating of the sides and the bottom in dry dock. Wherever the plating appeared to be bad, he hammer-tested it. This was done wherever the plating was rusty or wet. The vessel had a bar keel, which was resting on the blocks in the dry dock, and he was thus able to see all the plates in "A" strake. He did not remember seeing doubling plates on the bottom, but if there were doublers, this would not necessarily mean that his examination would be more rigorous. Had he noticed anything wrong with the ship's bottom, or had he known the vessel was undergoing an off-survey at that time, he would have made a note of it in his report.

THE OFF-SURVEY

Mr. WILLIAM HOPE PHILLIPS NIMMO, holder of a chief engineer's certificate and a war-time surveyor to the Ministry of War Transport, was called following evidence given on Monday by Mr. Falder, superintendent to the Elliott Company, regarding the off-survey of the vessel. Mr. Falder had said that certain repairs he considered

necessary when the vessel was handed back by the Ministry were deleted from the list by Mr. Nimmo.

Mr. Nimmo was unable to recollect the vessel even after being shown a picture of her. He told the Court that his function, in relation to off-surveys, was to act as a "repairs controller." But he had no information to show him what was the condition of a vessel at the time she was taken over by the Ministry.

Questioned by the Commissioner, Mr. Nimmo said his function at an off-survey was to see what repairs were necessary to make the vessel seaworthy.

Mr. BUCKNILL, in his address to the Court, said the chief point was the question of leakage generally, and he pointed out that the *Watercock* made as much as two tons at Dover and Newhaven, so that it was not unusual that the *Security* should make water. Regarding the water under the fore cabin, he suggested the worst that happened was that there was a seeping of water—in bad weather only. He recalled the evidence of the mate that in bad weather, the fore cabin was damp. And he drew attention also to the evidence of the fireman, Coomber, that, just before the vessel sank, the fore cabin was only damp, with no water running over the floor.

Counsel reminded the Court that no water was pumped from under the fore cabin after leaving Falmouth. He recalled that Chief Engineer Hills had said that if water was under the fore cabin he would have heard it when the ship rolled. On the suggestion that the water under the fore cabin found at Portsmouth, came down the chain pipes, Mr. Bucknill mentioned the evidence of Mr. Falder, that the chain locker had holes in the floor to enable any water to go down into the bilges and be pumped out. The evidence that there was a trickle of water coming from under the port door of the cross-bunker supported the evidence that there was just a small trickle of water through the bolt holes of the rubbing band, he submitted. He asked the Court to remember, also, the evidence given that the engine-room was dry at the time of the sinking.

Turning to the question of the plating, Mr. Bucknill drew attention to the special survey of the vessel in 1942, when Mr. Nicholas, who made the survey, drilled holes to test the plates. The only real evidence concerning the plating was the criticisms made by Connolly, the second engineer. "And here I must take the gloves off," Mr. Bucknill continued. "Connolly did not tell the truth. He did not mention anything about the plating in his first evidence, nor in his deposition."

He submitted that differences in Connolly's story indicated that he was not telling the truth. Coomber had said there was no water coming from the port pocket of the bunker; Connolly

had said there was. Connolly was the chief critic of the steering gear, and Counsel emphasised that the fact that Connolly could tell of only one case in which the nut on the control column slipped was proof that that did not happen again. Had it done so, Connolly would have told the Court about it. Had the steering engine been as bad as Connolly made it out to be the vessel would hardly have been sent out alone to tow a corvette, with only three riggers on board, from Harwich to Antwerp. "From the very manner in which Connolly gave his evidence it was clear he was not really attempting to give the Court an absolutely true picture," said Mr. Bucknill. He submitted that the charge made against the owners bordered on a criminal charge, and, as such, it must be proved beyond reasonable doubt.

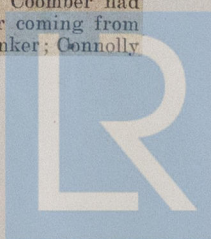
Mr. AUBREY B. JACKMAN, whom the Court had sent for, was then called in connection with evidence given by Mr. Falder. He said he was consulting engineer to William Watkins, Ltd., the tug owners, who managed the *Security* under the name of the *Stoke* on behalf of the Ministry of War Transport while the vessel was under requisition. He was present at the off-survey in 1944, when the vessel was being returned to Elliotts, but could not remember being present at the *Lloyd's Register* survey in dry dock later that year. Mr. Jackman said that his notes referring to the vessel were at home.

The Commissioner then asked Mr. Hewson (who started his address to the Court on Monday) to continue, saying that he would adjourn the inquiry—possibly to Friday morning—so that Mr. Jackman could produce his notes.

Mr. HEWSON said he had little further to add, except to reiterate that things seemed to happen once only in the *Security*. The question of the water under the crew space at Portsmouth was still a mystery, though the fact that nobody seemed to notice water in the same place on the journey from Falmouth was negative evidence. There was some indecision about the control of the tow. Captain Coubes had said in evidence that there was nothing really clear as to who was in charge. "There should be no doubt in the minds of the people concerned in the operation as to who is in charge. There should be no possibility of dual control."

Mr. Hewson said it was abundantly clear that, in dealing with tugs, the method of securing the rubbing band by means of through bolts was a very bad practice indeed. "Whatever method is adopted, that one should not be used," he said, "not even as a makeshift."

The inquiry was adjourned, and the date of resumption is to be notified.



© 2019

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

W311-0247 9/9