

INQUIRY INTO THE LOSS OF THE TUG "SECURITY"

The finding of the Court as to the cause of the loss of the above tug was given on the 3rd March, 1949. This was as follows:-

"The Court, having carefully enquired into the circumstances attending the above-mentioned shipping casualty, finds, for the reasons stated in the Annex hereto, that the "SECURITY" was lost owing to becoming unmanageable in exceptionally heavy weather and acquiring a list for some reason which was not satisfactorily established, and, in consequence, taking heavy water on board".

In the Report of the Court it is stated that:-

"There appears to be no doubt that the final cause of the sinking of the "SECURITY" was entry of water down the port fiddley door, which was open, and possibly, also, down the door from the engine-room to the after-deck. Once that started to happen there can have been little or no chance of any recovery".

By the courtesy of Mr. Stanley Pitts, Solicitor to the Ministry of Transport, a type-script copy of the full report of the Court has been loaned for perusal. The Court stated that this had been a difficult and unsatisfactory case to investigate.

Although the sinking of the "SECURITY" occurred on 8th December, 1946, the Inquiry did not start until 10th January, 1949.

The proceedings as reported in Lloyd's List are attached but the actual report occupies eighteen pages of foolscap.

The following are extracts in which reference is made to the Society:

"Although the condition of the "SECURITY" was a matter into which it was vital to enquire, little, if any, attempt had been made to collate the various repair accounts and survey reports. Indeed, it was only on the last day of the Inquiry that certain survey reports with regard to wastage in the ship's bottom plating were forthcoming, having been filed at Lloyd's Register under the name of "STOKE", which had been her name while under requisition. As

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"the change of name was known to those in charge of investigating the matter on behalf of the Minister, the Court is of opinion that these documents could, and ought to, have been discovered much sooner. Had they been so discovered they must, or ought to, have led (in conjunction with the relevant repair accounts which were held at the Ministry) to further enquiries."

COMMENTS:-

(There appears to be no stricture on the Society for failing to produce the above-mentioned reports, it being the Ministry's duty to collate repair accounts and survey reports. At the same time, the Ministry had asked for all reports since 1942, but due to a weakness in the Society's filing system some reports were overlooked and not produced at the proper time).

"In November, 1942, the "SECURITY" underwent her third No. 3 Special Survey and, as a result, was reclassified Lloyd's 100 A for towing purposes. During that survey about 30% of her side plating was drill tested; that is to say, every strake of plating from the main deck down to, but not including, the strake next the bar keel, the drilling being done in three places along the length of the vessel, just aft of the forepeak tank, amidships and just forward of the after peak tank.

"It is important to notice that, as stated in the previous paragraph, the plates in the strake next to the bar keel port and starboard were not drilled, the reason being that there was thick cement laid on the inside. This is of importance, because the two plates port and starboard in this strake amidships were found in March, 1944, to be so badly wasted that two large doubling plates had to be fitted on the outside. This was discovered because a leak developed while the "SECURITY" was at anchor off the Tyne in the course of towing another vessel from the Thames to the Firth of Forth in calm weather. Temporary repairs were carried out and the "SECURITY" completed her voyage to the Forth after which she was dry-docked at Sunderland. There it was found necessary to fit doubling plates port and starboard

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"each 7 ft. 6 inches by 28 ft.

"Unfortunately, this was one of the matters which only came to light
"in the course of the Inquiry, on the fifth day, and in consequence
"it was impossible to get any exact information as to the extent of
"the wastage because of the lapse of time and also because of the
"illness of the Lloyd's Surveyor who examined the vessel in dry dock.
"It is, however, clear that for the purpose of temporary repairs in
"the Tyne it was necessary for the diver to insert in the plate on
"the port side a wooden plug no less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter.
"After repairs in drydock she was reclassified by Lloyd's and there is
"no suggestion that this was not proper, but the fact that such wastage
"had occurred was obviously important and steps should have been
"taken to ensure that the fact was not forgotten."

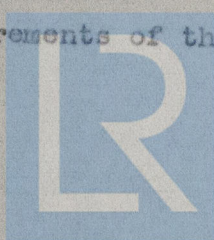
COMMENTS:-

(In the Society's Rules for Periodical Special Surveys, for second and subsequent Special Surveys No. 3, it is stated:

"The shell plating is to be drilled at such parts as the Surveyors
"may consider necessary to satisfy themselves as to the thickness.
"The number of holes drilled on each side of the vessel is to be in
"no case less than three in each strake of plating not covered with
"cement, the holes being drilled about amidships, and in the vicinity
"of the peak bulkheads. All paint as well as rust is to be entirely
"removed before the plates are gauged, and the actual thicknesses
"at all parts drilled are to be stated on a sketch which is to accompany
"the Surveyors' report.

"The plating in way of cement in the bottom need not be drilled,
"provided the cement is found to be adhering satisfactorily to the
"plating, and the Surveyors consider drilling at this part unnecessary.

The Special Survey in 1942 was carried out by the London Surveyors
in accordance with the above requirements of the Rules.



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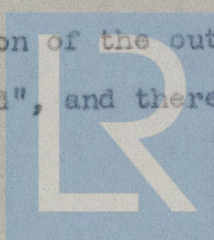
It is to be observed that in a subsequent Circular No. 1877 (issued in December, 1947), it is stated "At examinations in drydock, particular attention should be given to the bottom plating in way of cement, especially where no double bottom is fitted. In many cases this plating is subjected to excessive wear due to chafing on the ground, and such wastage in way of the cement is not readily discoverable by hammering. In all cases of doubt, test holes should be drilled".

In giving his evidence regarding the temporary repair to the bottom plating in the Tyne in 1944, Mr. G.G. Young stated that the hole was under the boilers and the diameter of the wood plug inserted in the hole was only $\frac{3}{4}$ " (it was the Owners' Superintendent who stated that the plug was $2\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter). Local corrosion at this part is not unusual and would not necessarily indicate that the ship was generally in a bad condition. The two doubling plates were fitted later under the supervision of Mr. Croudace in Sunderland, who was prevented from attending the Inquiry by illness.

A wrong idea of the extent of the corrosion is given by the size of the doubling plates as given in the report, viz: 7'-6" x 28'-0" This should of course be 7'-6" x 2'-4").

"The "SECURITY", a few months later, was placed in drydock for "collision repairs and was re-classed, the last survey being "on the 13th November, 1944, after all repairs had been properly "carried out. During those repairs it is material to note, for "reasons which appear later, that the steering gear was dismantled. "Advantage was taken of this drydocking to carry out the Annual "Freeboard Survey. Certificates in respect of both damage "repairs and load line survey were duly issued on behalf of Lloyd's "Register. The Certificate in respect of damage repairs stated "inter alia that the condition of the outside plating in the way "of the side-lights was "good", and there was a similar statement

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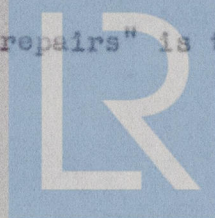
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"in the second certificate. The next occasion on which an examination was held on behalf of Lloyd's Register was on the 15th March, 1946, for the purpose of the Annual Load Line Survey, when again the condition of the side-scuttles was certified as "good". It is therefore somewhat surprising that only about a fortnight later, when the crew were engaged on chipping the side inside the crew-space, one of the chipping hammers went through the side near, but below, the waterline and below the after side light, or scuttle, on the starboard side. The plating was wasted to the thickness of paper in the way of the hole. Temporary repairs by plugging were made by the crew and a day or two later the vessel was placed on the hard and a plate about a foot square was welded on the outside. No more chipping had been carried out by the crew after the incident, but apart from a cursory examination in the vicinity of the hole nothing further in the way of examination was done. Moreover, the Owners' Superintendent who gave orders for the plate to be welded on omitted to call in Lloyd's Surveyor. He gave an unsatisfactory reason for this omission. Whether he would have done differently had he known of the wasted bottom plates must remain a matter of conjecture."

COMMENTS:-

There appears to be some confusion in the report between "plating in way of side lights" and the "side lights" or "side scuttles" themselves. "Plating in way of side lights" requires to be internally exposed and specially examined by the Surveyors at a Special Survey and its condition reported in the space provided on the survey report. On the other hand the side lights or scuttles themselves require to be examined at each Annual Load Line Survey, and their condition reported on the Load Line Survey Form.

The Society's report referred to in the findings as "Certificate and respective damage repairs" is the report on an



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ordinary condition and damage survey in dry dock, held by the London Surveyors and completed 13th November 1944, at which the plating under side lights was evidently generally examined, (although not strictly required), and found and stated to be "good". This was 18 months prior to the plating being chipped by the crew when a chipping hammer evidently found a local wasted spot.

The allegation that a similar statement "good" in respect of plating under side lights was made in the other reports including that of the 15th March 1946, is incorrect, as the statement on these reports, which are Annual Load Line Reports, refers to the side scuttles themselves and not to the plating.

"There was a second incident affecting the seaworthiness of "the "SECURITY", where again the Superintendent failed to call "in Lloyd's Surveyor. In September, 1946, the "SECURITY" had "been in collision, as a result of which she had suffered damage "to her stem. In consequence, in the course of her normal "working in the river, water obtained access to the forepeak "under pressure by reason of headway. Thereafter the water used "to spray out. While accepting the evidence that it was "difficult to obtain docking facilities at the time, the Court "was left with the impression that the Superintendent was not then "taking that active interest that he may have done in the past. "Whatever be the facts as to that, there is no doubt that repairs "were eventually made in November shortly before the "SECURITY" "sailed. There is no suggestion that such repairs were otherwise "than satisfactory, or that they had any connection with the "vessel's loss, but there is no doubt that this was a matter "affecting the vessel's seaworthiness and that Lloyd's Surveyor "should have been summoned.

"Having regard to all the circumstances, the Court has come to "the conclusion that the "SECURITY" was in a "ripe" condition. "It may be that such condition had developed fairly rapidly in "the last year or two, but the Court is of opinion that more care "in supervision would have revealed her state.

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COMMENTS:-

The Court has again reminded Owners of the importance of calling in the Society's Surveyors on all occasions when repairs which affect seaworthiness are carried out as is required by the Society's Rules.



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