

INQUIRY INTO THE LOSS OF THE TUG "SECURITY"

The findings 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."

The Report nevertheless states 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".

No reference is made to the fact that, had a bulkhead been fitted at the after end of the open forecastle with suitable doors - an arrangement which would involve some increase in tonnage measurement - entry of water down the open fiddley door would have been prevented or much restricted.

While the Court considered it would be wrong to conclude that the loss of the vessel was caused or contributed to by the wrongful act or default of anyone, unfavourable comment was made on:-

The Superintendent of the Owners for destroying notebooks and documents relating to the ship.

The Master of the "SECURITY" for not notifying the Owners of incidents affecting the vessel's seaworthiness.



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The Master of the "KELLETIA" for not consulting the tug Masters about the weather before ordering them to start the tow.

The Ministry of Transport for delay in holding the enquiry.

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

By the courtesy of the Solicitor to the Ministry of Transport, the full report of the Court has been loaned for perusal. Extracts from this report relating to this Society refer to:-

- (a) Delay in production of certain Survey reports.
- (b) Local wastage in the garboard strakes.
- (c) Condition of plating in way of sidelights.

Commenting on the above:-

(a) The Court appears to have passed no stricture on the Society for failure to produce the reports filed under the name "STOKE" while under Ministry requisition; but considered it to be the Ministry's duty to collate all repair accounts and survey reports. This lapse on the Society's part arose through disturbance in the normal filing system during the emergency period of the War, and which is now being rectified.

(b) The findings give an exaggerated impression of the local wastage found in March, 1944, at the garboard strakes amidships. The size of the two doubling plates fitted under the supervision of the Society's Surveyor at Sunderland is given in his

report as 7'6" x 2'4" (28"). The Court - obviously in error - refers to a size of 7'6" x 28'.

The possibility of wastage occurring in such parts where plates are covered by cement internally has been specially emphasized in a Circular to Surveyors (No.1877) issued in December, 1947.

(c) The findings show some confusion between "plating in way of sidelights" and "sidelights" or "side scuttles" themselves. "Plating in way of sidelights" requires to be internally exposed and specially examined by Surveyors at a Special Survey or when, in the course of damage repairs, access to these parts is possible. On the other hand, "side lights" or "side scuttles" themselves require to be examined and reported upon at each Annual Load Line Survey. The statement that only about a fortnight after, when the Load Line Survey was held on the 15th March, 1946, a chipping hammer used by one of the crew "went through the ship's side" is misleading, as the Surveyor at the Survey referred to was not called upon, neither did he examine the plating below the side scuttles, but only the sidelights themselves.

The Court stated that the case had proved difficult and unsatisfactory to investigate. A review of the evidence and findings has not indicated cause for criticism of the Surveyors responsible for the various inspections of this tug.

A summary of the findings is attached.

17th March, 1949.