

WSM/MT

29th July, 1936.

Messrs. Parker Garrett & Co.
St. Michael's Rectory, Cornhill,
LONDON. E.C. 3.

Dear Sirs,

"JOSEPH B. MEDILL".

We attended at the Moot Hall to-day when the Judgment of the Court was delivered.

As on other occasions, the Answers together with the Annex, which the Court have added, have been sent direct to the Board of Trade in London and if you will kindly arrange to bespeak a copy you should be able to get this to-morrow or the following day.

We set out below the material Answers which were given to the Questions. -

3. The design and specifications were prepared by W. Lambert Naval Architect, Montreal, and indicated the method to be followed in constructing the vessel.

4. The vessel was constructed in accordance with this method and this was a prudent method.

6. The scantlings were considered by Lloyd's Register and were sufficient at a draught of 14 ft fresh water on the Great Lakes.

10. The Building Contract called for a speed of $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour on a draught of 14 ft fresh water.

11. The B.O.T. permitted the loaded trial of the vessel to be run on a draught of 13 ft 8 ins. salt water. This was in order

W478-0038 11s Foundation

29/7/36.

12. The trial was run at Burntisland and the modifications allowed in the draught were satisfactory.
13. Yes. The vessel was lightened to bring her up to the Freeboard required for the trans-Atlantic voyage.
14. The first trial gave unsatisfactory results in regard to the vessel's steering quality.
15. As a result 6 ins. was cut off both rudders; the centre skeg was extended aft and an extra skeg was added.
16. The further loaded trial at Hartley was quite satisfactory.
17. This trial was run at a draught of 13 ft 7½ ins. and afterwards the vessel was lightened to bring her up to the freeboard assigned to her for the trans-Atlantic voyage.
18. Her steering gear was quite satisfactory.
19. Application was made to the B.O.T. to exempt the vessel from having a wireless sending set for the voyage.
20. Application was made by Swan & Hunter and was granted. The B.O.T. were justified in the circumstances in granting the exemption.
21. The range of the Receiving Set was approximately 1000 miles under normal conditions.
22. The vessel sailed from Wallsend on August 10th 1935.
23. Her mean draught was 13 ft. and the freeboard was 9 ft. ~~and~~ were both safe and proper.
24. The vessel was in a sound condition when she sailed from the United Kingdom
25. She was perfectly stable.
26. She was manned in accordance with the Regulations.
27. Apparently she took a Northerly passage to Bellisle.
28. She communicated with the "Stavanger Fjord" on August 17th in Lat. 57.19 N. and Long. 26.12 W. and no other vessel.

W 475-0038

215

29. She should have reached the Newfoundland Coast on August 24th 1935.

30. On August 24th 1935. Strong fresh winds near Bellisle. There was also a considerable amount of ice in the vicinity.

31. The cause of the vessel's loss must remain problematical. (See Annexe).

32. The most probable cause in the Court's opinion, was ice.

33. All hands, numbering 16 all told, were lost.

The Court also added an Annexe to ~~xxxx~~ its Findings and we set out below a brief outline of these.

In the first place the Court gave a detailed description of the vessel and briefly referred to her early history.

The Court mentioned that the vessel was loaded with a cargo of Coal which was trimmed in all holds and that the last that anyone heard of her was the "Stavanger Fjord" who spoke her on August 17th in Lat 57.19 N. Long. 26.12 W. She was the largest all-welded ship in the World of an unusual type and she was built solely for the purpose of sailing the Great Lakes and not for trans-Atlantic voyages. At the present ^{as} there have been few vessels of this type completed, ^{usually} there is no information and calculations available to show how vessels of this kind would answer to Deep Sea conditions and stresses. - The Court discussed at length the effect of stresses on a welded ship of this kind from a technical point of view and suggested that stresses in a welded ship might make themselves shown in the vicinity of the welded joints, but ~~we~~ ^{thought} there was not sufficient evidence available to discuss the matter with authority.

The vessel's moment of inertia appeared to be similar to that of a vessel which had been rivetted.

The Court also discussed the question of whether the vessel was sufficiently stiff and in regard to possible buckling in view of the elimination of connecting flanges in her construction but they did not give any decided opinion on this point. The Court however after considering the evidence

carefully were of opinion that this method of welding construction proved that construction was most carefully carried out and was satisfactory, and the freeboard assigned was quite correct.

In a vessel of this sort it was appreciated that any defective workmanship would be a serious factor but it was proved to the satisfaction of the Court that the work was first class in every respect and very special attention had been given by all parties concerned to the construction of this ship from start to finish. There was no defective work.

The Court was of opinion that a ship of this class would be more difficult to handle in certain weather conditions which might be met with in the Atlantic.

With regard to the Wireless in the opinion of the Court the B.O.T. had no alternative but to grant exemption under the existing regulations; it was a matter for consideration however, whether the regulations should not be altered to meet cases of this sort.

Dealing with the possible causes of loss these were

- (a). Collision - but there was no evidence of any other ship having been involved.
- (b). Submerged wreckage - but if vessel had struck wreckage the Court considered there would have been time to have launched the boats.
- (c). Fire due to spontaneous combustion of the coal was possible but improbable under the circumstances, and again, it was thought that the ship's boats could have been launched.
- (d). The vessel might have been wrecked on the Coast of Labrador or Newfoundland but by this time wreckage would surely have been found.
- (e). Faulty construction - For the reasons previously given the Court negatived this.
- (f). Bad weather, causing the cargo to shift. - The Court thought this unlikely.
- (g). The vessel might have been overwhelmed by bad weather but again, on the evidence the Court thought this unlikely.

Messrs Parker Garrett & Co.

-5-

29/7/26.

(h) Impact with ice. - Of all the possible causes the Court thought this the most likely as it seemed probable that sudden disaster had overtaken the ship and if she ~~was~~ struck by an iceberg she would probably be ripped open and founder like a stone.

x

We send you an extra copy of this letter as you may wish to send it to clients.

Yours faithfully,

INGLEDEW & CO.

Encl.



© 2019

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

W475-0038