

Enquiry into the loss of the All-Welded Motor Vessel  
"JOSEPH MEDILL".

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This Enquiry was held in Newcastle on 21st and 22nd July, 1936, before Judge Richardson and three Assessors.

The vessel was of the "Lake" type, 252'3" x 43'10" x 22'0", and was built by Messrs. Swan, Hunter & Wigham Richardson for Messrs. Quebec & Ontario Transportation Co.Ld., for service on the Great Lakes and Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The class assigned by this Society was #A1 "For Service on the Great Lakes and Gulf of St. Lawrence (from April to October) at an extreme draught of 14 feet, "Electrically Welded".

The vessel is of very full form, the block coefficient being .886. At the "light" trial the steering was ~~very~~ satisfactory, but at the loaded trial it was found to be very unsatisfactory, as the vessel would not keep a course. Alterations were therefore made in dry dock. These consisted of an extension of the skeg, which was fitted at the centre line aft, fitting wing skegs in way of the propeller bossing, and a slight modification in the rudders and propellers. On a subsequent trial the arrangement proved satisfactory.

The vessel left the Tyne with a cargo of coal on 10th August 1935, on a pass issued by the Board of Trade, and on a freeboard certificate which was also issued by the Board of Trade. The freeboard assigned was 9'0", corresponding to a draught of 13'0½". She was last seen on 17th August in Lat. 57-19N. and Long. 26-12W, and was posted "Missing" on 30th October, 1935.

Considerable evidence was given regarding welding and the strength of the vessel, the preparation for the Atlantic voyage, the docking of the vessel in the loaded condition prior to the final trials, the exemption granted by the Board of Trade in respect of wireless, and the probable



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cause of the loss.

The evidence on all these matters, including evidence given by the Society's Surveyors, went to show that it was very improbable that the loss was caused by any defect in the construction or in the preparation of the vessel for the contemplated voyage. "Heavy weather" and "Ice" were suggested as the probable cause of the loss. Charts showed that there were considerable quantities of drift ice in the vicinity of the path of the vessel, and it is likely that the Court will find that the latter is the probable cause of the loss of the ship.

With regard to the exemption granted by the Board of Trade in respect of wireless, it was shown in evidence that similar exemption had been granted in all previous cases of vessels of this type making the Atlantic voyage, and there was no justification for withholding exemption merely because this was a "welded" ship.



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