

TELEPHONES:  
ROYAL 1311 (4 Lines).  
TELEGRAMS:  
"SPARDECK, FEN. LONDON."

PRINCE LINE LIMITED,  
56, LEADENHALL ST.,  
LONDON, E.C.3.

6th. April, 1939.

The Secretary,  
Lloyd's Register of Shipping,  
71, Fenchurch Street, E. C. 3.

Dear Sir,

s. s. "ITALIAN PRINCE".

In connection with the loss of this vessel by fire, you will be aware that a Board of Trade Enquiry has been held and the Findings of the Court, presided over by Mr. K.S. Carpmael, K.C., were announced on the 28th. March.

We think it right that we should communicate to you the following extracts from the Court's Report:-

"The "Italian Prince" was constructed from plans which had been approved by Lloyd's Register of Shipping on the 17th September, 1919, under the 1919/1920 Rules which contained inter alia the following : "Section 49 (13) Oil fuel pipes should, where practicable, be placed above the stokehold and engine room plates, and where they are always visible". The wording of the Rule was changed later, and in 1936/1937 was as follows:

"Section 20 (5) Oil pipes and fittings - - (2) The oil pressure pipes conveying heated oil are to be of solid drawn steel, and placed in sight above the platform in well-lighted parts of the stokehold or engine room". It should, of course, be noted that the later wording was not compulsory with regard to the "Italian Prince" as she had been built under the earlier rule.

The Court is of opinion that the words "always visible" in the earlier rule mean that the pipes should be so placed that they can be seen by those on watch in the engine room or stokehold in the ordinary course of their duties, without having to take extraordinary steps in order to sight the pipes.



As stated above, the Court is of opinion that the initial cause of the fire was leakage from the supply pipe which led along the outboard side of the starboard boiler. It, therefore, becomes important to consider:-

(a) whether this pipe was always visible within the meaning of the rule, and

(b) if not, whether this was due to impracticability.

The Court is clearly of opinion that the pipe was not always visible within the meaning of the rule, although it would have been perfectly practicable to have rendered it always visible. It was quite invisible from the engine room, and could only have been seen with difficulty from the stokehold even in the absence of the fender plate at the wing. With this fender plate in position carried to a height of about 10 feet above the stokehold floor, sighting of the pipe, which entered the stokehold immediately above the line of the top of the fender plate, was entirely prevented in ordinary working conditions. There were no gratings over the top of the boiler giving access to the somewhat confined space under the between deck bunker; and even if gratings had been arranged, it is doubtful whether the view of the supply pipe would have been adequate since an oil fuel return pipe was led immediately above it. Nor could the supply pipe readily be seen from the tank top since it was led at a height of fully thirteen feet above the inner bottom, and was probably partly concealed by the round of the boiler".

and later on:-

"It was urged on behalf of the Owners that the vessel had been built according to plans approved by Lloyd's Register which shewed the actual position of the pipe in question; that the vessel was regularly surveyed thereafter by Lloyd's Surveyors; and that at the time the change to oil burning was made in May 1937, the vessel was, in fact, undergoing her second No. 1.



Survey. These are powerful considerations in favour of the Owners, but for the reasons indicated above, the Court is of opinion that there was failure on the part of the owners representatives to which the condition of the vessel on sailing must be attributed.

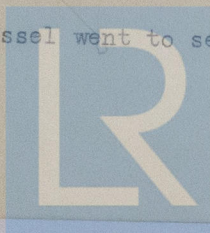
As regards the future, the Court considers that the record of this disaster provides emphasis for the requirement that all pipes containing heated oil under pressure must be completely visible and easily accessible."

We have merely quoted two extracts having particular reference to the rules of your Society in relation to the oil fuel pipe. There are, of course, other matters dealt with in the Court's Findings, but chiefly for the reasons dealt with in the extracts quoted above, the Court came to the conclusion that the "Italian Prince" was not in a good and seaworthy condition on sailing.

It is perhaps unnecessary to emphasize that the "Italian Prince" was built to plans approved by your Society; she has at all times remained classed 100 A.1; she completed her last Survey under the supervision of your Society in May 1937; your Surveyors were present during the change over from coal to oil burning, and also when the new burners were installed.

At no time during the eighteen years since the vessel was built has it been suggested that the vessel did not in every respect, and particularly in respect of the position of this oil fuel pipe, comply with the rules of your Society. Neither has it at any time been suggested that the position of this pipe should be altered. On the contrary we are aware that there are many other vessels afloat classed with your Society, in which this pipe is in a similar position.

Notwithstanding the foregoing facts, the Court of Enquiry has held that when the vessel went to sea on her last voyage



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she was not in a good and seaworthy condition.

In these circumstances, we shall be glad to have the comments of your Society in view of the important questions which will inevitably arise.

Yours faithfully,

For PRINCE LINE LIMITED.

*E. C. Johnston.*  
Secretary.



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WSIS-008244



For the <sup>Ship</sup> Chief Engineer Surveyors

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