

## THE "HARTLEY" LOSS.

Inquiry Opened at  
Middlesbrough.

From Our Own Correspondent.

MIDDLESBROUGH, Thursday.

The Middlesbrough stipendiary magistrate, Mr. Griffiths Jones, presided at a Board of Trade inquiry, held at the Town Hall to-day, to investigate the foundering in the English Channel on Nov. 27 last of the steamer *Hartley*. The assessors were Captain D. F. Macdonald, O.B.E., Mr. J. Carmichael and Rear-Admiral Booty, C.B., M.V.O.

Mr. C. B. Fenwick represented Messrs. Richley, Halvorsen & Sample, Hull, owners of the vessel; while Captain E. V. Hugo, D.S.C., Middlesbrough agent to the Merchant Service Guild, watched the inquiry on behalf of the relatives of Captain W. Pearson, who was master of the vessel.

Mr. BURTON, appearing on behalf of the Board of Trade, intimated that the inquiry would last for some days, and that eighteen or nineteen witnesses would be called, including the only two survivors, S. Adams, of Dunston-on-Tyne, and J. Keogh, of Newry.

## A SELF TRIMMER.

The *Hartley*, Mr. BURTON explained, was practically a new vessel, being finished by her builders, Messrs. Smiths Dock Company, Ltd., of South Bank, in September last year. When she left Barry for Ghent on Nov. 25 it was her eighth voyage. Her carrying capacity was 3335 tons, while the vessel was classed 100 A 1 at Lloyd's, being of the type known as self-trimmers. The *Hartley* underwent no actual trimming by stevedores except the levelling down of coal to permit of the hatches being laid on.

This inquiry would be of considerable interest to shipowners and the shipping industry generally, and it was fortunate that they had survivors from the vessel, because in other instances where vessels of the self-filling and self-trimming type had been lost there had been no direct evidence as to what happened, and everything had hitherto depended upon inference. The boat was seen, Mr. BURTON continued, by a Board of Trade surveyor shortly before she sailed. Evidence would point to the fact that she was not down to her water mark, but that there existed a margin of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. between the draught and the permissible load. There were four hatches.

Describing the voyage he added that the vessel was going smoothly until the night of Nov. 26, when she encountered a south-westerly gale, which continued from midnight onward. About four o'clock she began to ship water, and at 6.20 shipped heavy water in No. 3 hatch. It was found that the tarpaulin on No. 3 hatch was ripped, and although repaired and an additional rope lashed over it, it was swept overboard, followed later by other hatches, and in a quarter of an hour No. 3 hold

was full. The vessel developed a list to starboard, which it would be stated by a witness was one of 20 deg.

Mr. BURTON had observed previously that in cases of vessels of similar type being lost there had been an inference that the hatchways had succumbed to the force of the sea. At 9.35 the captain sent out an S.O.S.. The lifeboat was launched, and 19 of the crew were taken off, one able seaman having been drowned by falling into the sea. The steamer *Machaon*, responding to signals of distress, drew alongside the lifeboat, which, however, capsized, and only two members of the crew of the *Hartley* were rescued. There was a consensus of opinion that each member of the ill-fated crew wore a lifebelt, and that good discipline was maintained. The steamer *Alberta* also came on the scene and stood by, in the hope of giving assistance.

## QUESTIONS FOR THE COURT.

Questions which the Board of Trade needed an answer to were:—

What was the cost of the *Hartley* to her owners?

What was her value when she left Barry? What insurances were effected on the ship?

What was the condition and arrangement of the hatchways?

Were the construction of the hatchways and security of the hatchcovers such as to ensure safety?

When she left Barry was she in a seaworthy condition?

Was she properly loaded?

What measures were taken to prevent shifting, and what was the cause of water getting into No. 3 hatch?

Evidence was then called, and Mr. F. BOOKER, who piloted the *Hartley* from Barry Dock to the sea, expressed an opinion that the vessel was seaworthy and over half an inch light.

Captain EDWARD DONN, of the *Machaon*, gave evidence as to the rescue efforts made by members of his crew, but said that it was too dangerous to launch a lifeboat from the vessel.

Similar evidence was given by Mr. H. HETHERINGTON, chief officer of the *Machaon*, Captain SMITH, of the *Alberta*, and FRANCES HEADGES, chief officer of the *Alberta*.

JAMES WILLIAM CAIRNS, shipyard manager to Smith's Dock Company, Ltd., South Bank, medallist in naval architecture and a member of the North East Coast Institution of Shipbuilders and Engineers, stated that he saw the vessel built. He produced the specifications, and gave details of the construction of the four hatchways. There were, he said, about 96 hatch covers to each hatch. They were made of white wood 11 in. broad and 3 in. thick, with lengths of 10 ft. and 10 ft. 6 in., according to the sizes of the hatches. The tarpaulin used was of a standard kind adopted by Smiths' Dock Company, and supplied to other owners, being of medium thickness. Lashings were used, though those were found by the owners as usual.

Asked to express his personal opinion, WITNESS stated that he considered steel bars more satisfactory than lashings.

The inquiry was adjourned until to-morrow.



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