

COAL-CARRYING VESSELS.

BOARD OF TRADE INSTRUCTIONS TO SURVEYORS.

Particularly apropos at the present time, following on the inquiry into the Hartley disaster is a printed leaflet issued by the Mercantile Marine Department of the Board of Trade, containing instructions for the guidance of surveyors in inspecting coal-carrying ships. The instructions, which give effect to the recommendations contained in the report of the Informal Committee on Coal-carrying Vessels, 1924, are as follow:—

1.—SECURITY OF HATCHWAYS.

Surveyors should pay special attention to the security of hatchways and other weather deck openings; they should satisfy themselves that the hatch covers and their supports are in good condition, that the beams and fore and afters have support of sufficient width, and that the hatch covers have a bearing surface at least two inches in width. In cases where Tyzack or other hatch sections, already fitted in existing ships, provide a width of bearing surface approximately satisfying the foregoing condition, the surveyor at present need not raise objection, provided the sections are satisfactory in other respects.

There should be provided at least two good tarpaulins for each weather deck hatchway, and satisfactory means for effectively battening them down.

Further provision is to be made for securing independently each section of the hatch covers by rope lashings, or other equally effective means, after the tarpaulins are battened down. At least six spare hatch covers should be carried for use in emergency.

Where the detaining officer is satisfied in any case that the means adopted for the security of the hatchways are not sufficient to ensure the safety of the vessel, he should, if necessary, detain the vessel as unseaworthy.

2 and 3.—CLEATS AND COAMINGS.

Surveyors should take every opportunity when surveying new coal-carrying ships during construction and measurement, or when renewals or alterations are being made in existing ships, or when plans relating to such ships are submitted to them, to impress upon builders and owners the importance of complying with paragraphs 2 and 3 of the recommendations in the committee's report. Should the surveyor be unable to secure compliance he should report the case to the principal officer for submission to the Board.

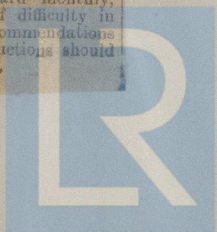
4.—LOADING.

The report emphasises the necessity for careful and proper loading of coal cargoes, especially in ships known to be tender.

Surveyors should take every opportunity of inspecting the loading of coal-carrying ships, and in each district a list should be prepared of ships visiting the district which the surveyors know from actual experience to be tender when laden with coal. The list should indicate the description of coal carried, and the action taken to render the ships safe at sea. Particular attention should be given in these cases to the loading of such cargoes as anthracite peas, &c., which are known to be more liable to shift than ordinary coal.

If the surveyor is satisfied in any case that the coal cargo has not been carefully and properly loaded and the vessel is thereby rendered unsafe, he should report to the detaining officer in the usual way, and the ship should, if necessary, be detained until effective action has been taken to render her safe.

Copies of the lists prepared in each district should be forwarded to the Board monthly, for the present, and any cases of difficulty in securing compliance with the recommendations of the committee and these instructions should be reported to the Board at once.



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