

## ECHO OF HARTLEY INQUIRY.

### SHIPMASTERS FAVOUR STEEL HATCHES.

### GERMAN OFFICERS ON THE BRIDGE—A PROTEST.

### POINTS BEFORE M.M.S.A. MEETING.

SEVERAL subjects of interest to ships' officers were discussed at the quarterly meeting of the Mercantile Marine Service Association yesterday at Liverpool, under the chairmanship of the president (Captain G. C. M. Oakley).

A member, speaking on the advantages of the adoption of a steel hatch for protection in heavy weather, said he thought ships ought to have a different method of construction than the present open hatches, which were very dangerous, as it was almost impossible to prevent the tarpaulins being washed away. He had been in a ship that had a steel hatch, and there was no trouble whatever. They could close the hatch down within about a quarter of an hour, and there was no possibility of the hatch being smashed in.

#### A QUESTION OF CONSTRUCTION.

Another member said he thought the suggestion put forward was a very suitable one, but it obviously formed itself into a question of construction, as it was very difficult to put a steel hatch into a ship after it had been built, but there seemed no reason why the Board of Trade should not have some protection policy in regard to the construction of these ships, seeing they had so many losses during the past few years.

The master of the Hartley seemed to have been subject to criticism at the inquiry because he did not put his helm up, and at full speed tried to run before the wind and sea. He ventured to suggest that if the master of the Hartley had gone full speed for a long period he would have found himself on the coast of France and he would have had to round-to again, and he did not think it was a very logical criticism from a court of inquiry. He thought it was a weak point.

#### BAD WEATHER DEFIED.

One member said he was on a ship which was fitted with steel hatch covers, and they had had no damage even although they had pretty bad weather off Cape Hatteras. He thought they were the finest things going. They had nine hatches, and in less than half an hour they had them secured.

In the old City of Paris, 35 years ago, said a member, they had those steel hatches in two sections. They were of a portable size, and were placed into position very quickly. They were perfectly safe and watertight, and would stand a very heavy sea breaking upon them without any fear of fracture.



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