

LOSS OF THE "RADYR"

B.O.T. Inquiry Resumed at Cardiff

The Board of Trade inquiry into the loss of the Cardiff steamer *Radyr*, which foundered off Hartland Point, North Devon, on Dec. 7 last, the entire crew of 21 being drowned, was resumed at Cardiff yesterday. The *Radyr*, a vessel of 3775 tons, was bound from Cardiff to Bordeaux with coal, and at the opening of the inquiry it was emphasised that there was no suggestion of overloading. The question of the hatch covers, however, was a vital one, particularly as the steamer was a self-trimmer, and it was stated that one of the main questions the Court would have to consider would be as to whether any special provision or specification should be laid down with regard to hatch covers for coal-carrying steamers. Mr. W. Hugh Jones, K.C., Deputy Stipendiary of Cardiff, presided over the inquiry, with the following assessors: Captain William Blacklin, Captain F. J. Thompson, and Mr. T. H. Blaker.

The previous proceedings were reported in Lloyd's List of July 24.

The Board of Trade was represented by Mr. L. H. Allen Pratt, of Messrs. Vachell & Co., while Mr. A. M. Ingledew, of Messrs. Ingledew & Sons, appeared for the owners, the Rupert Phillips Steamship Co., Ltd., of Cardiff. Lieut.-Col. H. L. Wheeler attended on behalf of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

The owners were not made parties to the inquiry, but Mr. INGLEDREW said they were anxious to assist the Court in every way possible.

Mr. RUPERT PHILLIPS, managing director of the owning company, was recalled and briefly questioned with regard to the trimming of the *Radyr*. He said the vessel was a self-trimmer with four holds. He assumed that the captain was responsible for deciding what quantity of coal should be placed into each hold.

JOHN PHILLIP CARREL, marine engineering superintendent, said he acted for the owners of the *Radyr* when she was transferred from French owners in April, 1929. She was surveyed by Captain Harrison on behalf of the Board of Trade, who directed that certain renewals should be made. There were two lifeboats on the boat deck above the officers' accommodation. The vessel was fitted with new wireless apparatus, while when the steamer was in Mount Stuart Dry Dock immediately after transfer other replacements were effected to the hatch covers and ventilators. Tarpaulins which complied with Board of Trade regulations were also supplied. When the *Radyr* sailed on Dec. 6 she had four sets of tarpaulin for each hatch. Witness said he had nothing to do with the shipment of the cargo on the last voyage, but he went on board a few days before the steamer sailed. The tanks then were all pumped out except for draining. He estimated the surplus bunkers on board to be 33 tons, and an additional 143 tons was shipped. The weight of stores would be about twelve tons. In further reply to Mr. Pratt witness said that on Sunday, Dec. 8, he proceeded to Bideford, the owner having been informed that the body of one of the gien had been washed ashore south of Hartland. There was a lifebelt on the body, which was identified as being that of the wireless operator, while a watch found on the body had stopped at 8.10. The bodies of three firemen were also washed ashore near Barnstaple Bay.

THE QUESTION OF HATCH COVERS

Mr. THOMAS HARRISON, nautical surveyor of the Board of Trade, said he surveyed the *Radyr* when she was transferred from the French to the British flag in 1929. The whole of the upper deck hatches were examined and certain covers renewed or repaired. The hatch covers were three inches thick. Certificates were given in respect of the wireless apparatus, lights, and fog signals, while the life-saving appliances were found to be in order. "In every respect," Mr. Harrison added, "the vessel was in a thoroughly seaworthy condition."

A number of hatch covers which had been recovered from the sea were produced in Court, and Mr. ERNEST PRIGG, of the Mount Stuart Dry Docks, Ltd., said he thought that one of them at any rate was made in his yard. With regard to the other hatch covers, however, he did not think they were made by his firm, as they were of different width. He agreed that the markings on all the hatches were similar, but insisted that he had no knowledge of the wider hatches.

Mr. PRATT: Is there any apparent difference in the age of the timber in the hatches that have been recovered?—Witness: They look similar.

Mr. T. H. BLAKE: What is the difference in the band holes in the hatch covers in dispute and the one you recognise?—Witness: There is no difference.

Mr. Prigg, after a further inspection, said he thought one of the hatches was made with red pine and another with white pine, whereupon Mr. PRATT remarked, "Unfortunately we have an expert from the British Museum who does not agree with you."

Mr. JAMES JOSEPH NIXON, managing director of the Nixon Rope and Brattice Cloth Company, Cardiff, said that the tarpaulin supplied to the Rupert Phillips Steamship Company for the *Radyr* was guaranteed to be all flax and to contain no mixture of either hemp or jute. It was of a maximum weight of 18½ to 19 oz. before proofing.

Mr. SAMUEL JOHNSON ARTHUR, manager for Messrs. Worms & Co., shippers of the lost cargo, said that when the *Radyr* went down she had a coal cargo of 2799 tons and 143 tons of bunkers.

Mr. FREDK. GILBERT, outdoor foreman of Worms & Co., said he supervised a portion of the loading of the *Radyr* and gave instructions as to the way the mixing the various coals should be carried out. He last saw her on Dec. 5, when the vessel wanted about 120 tons of cargo to complete. The vessel being a self-trimmer, the trimmers did not go under deck.

The inquiry was adjourned until to-day.



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