

LOSS OF THE "RADYR"

Evidence Regarding Vessel's Hatch Covers

The Board of Trade inquiry into the loss of the Cardiff steamer *Radyr*, which foundered with all hands off Hartland Point on Dec. 7 last, entered upon the third day at Cardiff yesterday, before Mr. W. Hugh Jones, K.C., deputy stipendiary of Cardiff, assisted by the following assessors: Mr. T. H. Baker, Captain R. W. B. Blacklin and Captain F. J. Thompson.

The previous proceedings were reported in *Lloyd's List* of July 24 and 25.

The Board of Trade was represented by Mr. Allen Pratt, of Messrs. Vachell & Co., while Mr. A. M. Ingledew, of Messrs. Ingledew & Sons, represented the owners of the *Radyr*, the Rupert Phillips Steamship Company, Ltd.; who, however, were not made parties to the inquiry. On Thursday Mr. Ingledew and Mr. Rupert Phillips were relieved from further attendance on the understanding that they would be available by phone if again required.

The *Radyr*, it will be recalled, was on a voyage with a coal cargo from Cardiff to Bordeaux, when she experienced heavy weather in the Bristol Channel and was sunk with the loss of the entire crew of 21. There was no suggestion that the vessel was overladen, but it was stated that the most important question which would arise was in respect of the hatch covers, and the Court would have to decide whether it was advisable that special provisions should be laid down regarding hatches for coal-carrying steamers.

When the hearing was resumed yesterday Mr. J. J. Dixon, of the Dixon Rope and Brattice Cloth Company, Cardiff, was recalled and questioned concerning the guarantee of the tarpaulin supplied to the *Radyr*. He said he was satisfied that the material was free from hemp and jute and was in accord with the Board of Trade regulations.

Mr. THOMAS HARRISON, the Board of Trade surveyor at Cardiff, was also recalled regarding the hatch covers which had been recovered and were believed to be from the wreck of the *Radyr*. He said he could not identify them as belonging to the *Radyr*, but they were similar in type, construction and marking to those generally used in the port of Cardiff. Other vessels left Cardiff about the same time as the *Radyr*, and although some had to return through damage caused by the storm, only one, the *Francis Duncan*, was actually lost. Hatch covers were usually condemned, he said, when they were badly fitting or when the edges and ends had been damaged through rough usage.

Mr. HUGH JONES: Do you take any notice of the kind of wood? Witness: I usually direct that the hatches should be of good, sound material, and leave it to the owners to provide what they think fit. Red pine is usually used in this district.

Mr. HARRISON added that he had never found it necessary to order that a particular type of timber should be used. If, however, it had too many knots or cross grain he would be justified in rejecting it.

Mr. THOMAS CHARLES TOBIN, naval architect to Harland & Wolff, Ltd., Belfast, the builders of the *Radyr* in 1918, gave particulars of the vessel, which, he said, was of standard design and known as "D" type. He gave a detailed description of the latches and covers and said the latter were made of three-inch white pine. They were about 3 ft. long and 22 in. wide. White pine was the usual type of timber used, but when Mr. Pratt suggested there was no such wood, witness said he did not know whether that was a scientifically accurate term, but it was generally accepted in the timber trade.

LIFEBOAT COXSWAIN'S EVIDENCE

The next witness was JOHN ANDREW ATKINSON, coxswain of the lifeboat at Padstow, which he said was one of the best around the coast and cost £15,000. He received a message relating to the *Radyr* at a quarter to twelve on the morning of Dec. 7, which read: "SOS *Radyr* in distress off Hartland." He believed that the message had come from Appledore and was conveyed by the guard of a train. The lifeboat was launched at 12.30, when the weather was still very bad. They arrived about seven miles west of Hartland Point at 4.20, and after cruising for a time saw some wreckage. It was not quite dark but searchlight signals were used. There was no trace of any boats or bodies. They remained cruising and returned to Padstow at 9.50. Answering Capt. Thompson, Atkinson said that he did not think that the ordinary ship's lifeboat could have lived in such a sea as they had to battle against that day.

Evidence as to a number of hatch covers believed to be from the *Radyr* having been washed ashore was given by farm labourers living on the coast. Mr. JESSE HOWARD, a farmer, living near Bude, said that many of the hatches were in a damaged condition.

Captain GEORGE HERBERT WAITE, of Bridlington, master of the steamer *Headcliffe*, of South Shields, a vessel of 3654 tons gross, told the Court that he left Cardiff about seven o'clock on Dec. 6 last, just before the *Radyr*. There was a fresh breeze blowing about force 4, while there was a slight sea. After leaving dock he saw the *Radyr* about eleven o'clock; they were then off Nash. The wind was freshening slightly, and the *Radyr* appeared to be behaving quite ordinarily. About four o'clock that afternoon the weather became worse. They were then between Bull and Lundy, but they saw nothing of the *Radyr*. From four o'clock onwards the wind freshened considerably. The *Headcliffe* was able to make only little progress. At seven o'clock the sea was very heavy, while at midnight, when he passed Hartland, the force of the wind was about 12 and the sea was very heavy. Witness said he saw the lights of another vessel astern of him, but no trace of that steamer was seen subsequently. "I have never experienced such bad weather around the English coast," Captain Waite added; "it was a gale of exceptional severity, and my ship was almost unmanageable. I turned round and made for shallower water." Witness said he received several messages that night from vessels which were in trouble one way or

the other, but no message was received from the *Radyr*. At 7.40 the next morning, when the last message from the *Radyr* was sent out, the *Headcliffe* was dodging between Bull Point and the Foreland, and would not have been able to reach the *Radyr* in time to be of any effective assistance. Having regard to the weather, he did not think the *Radyr* would have been able to put out a lifeboat.

Mr. HARRY THOMPSON COOPER, chief officer of the *Headcliffe*, said that he first saw the *Radyr* when they were making for Hartland Point on the afternoon of Dec. 6. At four o'clock the *Radyr* was a little above the starboard beam of the *Headcliffe*, which was then 6½ miles off Bull Point. He saw the *Radyr* again at 5.30, when he was on the bridge. They then appeared to be overtaking the *Radyr*, which was not more than a mile and a half off. When he left the bridge at eight o'clock the *Radyr* was still on the starboard quarter. She did not appear to be in any difficulties, although the weather was getting worse. From eight o'clock to midnight they travelled only two miles, so were only holding their own. Hurricane squalls were encountered, but the *Headcliffe*, although pitching, was not shipping much water. He saw nothing of the *Radyr* after eight o'clock, when she was 6½ miles off Hartland Point. The weather was so bad that it would have been impossible to launch a lifeboat. Witness said he was concerned as to the safety of the hatches of the *Headcliffe*, which were smaller than those of the *Radyr*.

The hearing was adjourned until to-day.