

LOSS OF THE "RADYR"

Evidence on the Duties of Trimmers

When the inquiry into the loss of the Cardiff steamer *Radyr* was resumed at the Law Courts, Cardiff, yesterday afternoon before Mr. Hugh Jones, K.C., Deputy Stipendiary, and three Assessors, Capt. William B. Blacklin, Capt. F. J. Thompson and Mr. T. H. Blaker, Mr. ALLEN PRATT, of Messrs. Vachell & Co., representing the Board of Trade, said he wished to refer to a matter of importance. It was a statement which appeared in a local newspaper that morning that evidence was given on Monday that the steamer was overloaded when she left on her last voyage. Reports of that description were likely to be very misleading. It had already been stated that the Board of Trade were perfectly satisfied that the *Radyr* was not overloaded and that she was not below her marks. In view of the statement published that day it was desirable from the public point of view that he should mention the matter.

The DEPUTY STIPENDIARY: It is sufficient that you have made this public in court.

Mr. Pratt said he wished to correct a reply which he gave the Court the previous day, when the Court inquired if there were any instructions in regard to trimming which were issued generally. He (Mr. Pratt) was informed that the instructions to surveyors which he had handed in, namely, Circular 1665, issued by the Board of Trade, had been circulated among owners and supervisors. It was a public document and could be obtained by anyone. Sect. 4 contained provisions with regard to loading. It said at the beginning of the section: "It is important that all coal-carrying vessels shall be carefully and properly loaded. This is especially necessary in (a) vessels having proportions less favourable to stability than are usually found in the majority of modern vessels in this trade, (b) vessels, especially small vessels with large cubic capacity, having hatchways whose breadth is less than a certain proportion of the breadth of the vessel, and (c) vessels loaded with the class of coal liable to shift."

The first witness called yesterday was Captain THOMAS HARRISON, nautical surveyor to the Board of Trade, Cardiff, who produced records from the Board of Trade's books showing that the *Radyr* had always been properly loaded when leaving that port.

Mr. W. W. HARRIS, Board of Trade surveyor, Cardiff, also gave evidence that since the loss of the *Radyr* he had measured truck loads of the different kinds of coal that were loaded into the *Radyr*. Witness produced a general account of the cubic capacities and the angles of repose of all the coals shipped in the *Radyr*.

Mr. FREDERICK WILLIAM THORNE, engaged at the engineering laboratory, Royal Naval College, Greenwich, as Lecturer in Applied Mechanics, deposed to making tests on certain material supplied to him by the Board of Trade. The result of his tests showed the timber which was part of a hatch cover to be average quality material.

Further evidence regarding the methods adopted in loading the *Radyr* prior to her last voyage was given by Mr. THOMAS EDWARD RICHARDS, Mr. WILLIAM KENNEDY, and Mr. GEORGE STEELE, deputy supervisors on behalf of the Coaltrimmers' Union. The last-named, referring to No. 4 hatch, said he saw coal above the beams, but later it had been levelled off. The only work the trimmers were expected to do in a self-trimmer was to level hatches. Only, with an ordinary boat the men might be down working her up. They worked the shuttle in such a manner as to distribute the coal as far as possible over the whole area.

Mr. PRATT: One of the things that you should be careful about is to avoid the formation of a cone when you are loading?—WITNESS: Quite.

Replying to further questions, Witness agreed that the capacity of No. 4 hold was 596 tons, and that only 354 tons was loaded on this occasion. The boat finished on his turn, and everything was in order. There were no complaints made to him.

INSPECTING-TRIMMING

Answering Captain Thompson, WITNESS said it was his duty to inspect the work of trimmers. In carrying out those duties it was usual to go on board, but not always.

Captain THOMPSON: On this occasion you did not go on board?—WITNESS: The first time, but not afterwards.

Which is the most important time to inspect the trimming—during loading, or after completion?—It may be either, sir. It may be during loading or after she has finished. We have to satisfy the mate.

Pressed on the point by Captain Thompson, WITNESS eventually said he thought that during the work was the most important time.

Captain THOMPSON: If the mate complains on completion, that is not so important?—WITNESS: Oh, yes. Then we have to attend to it.

WITNESS added that he did not happen to be on board when the last wagon was tipped.

Captain THOMPSON: You did not think it important to go when the last wagon was tipped into No. 4?—No, sir.

WITNESS added that the leading trimmer would see that all was correct.

Lieut. - Commander HUBERT LESLIE WHEELER, district inspector of the Royal National Life Boat Institution, stationed at Exeter, was the last witness called before the adjournment. He explained that he was in charge of the whole of the lifeboat stations from Hastings to Burnham in the Bristol Channel. Asked by Mr. Pratt as to the Appledere lifeboat, witness said she was always able to be launched, even though the water were rough. The difficulty in putting her out to sea, however, was the Bideford Bar, a sandbank running across the harbour.

Mr. PRATT: We have heard the wind was force ten on this day. You know that lifeboat men are always prepared to face danger. What do you think of the practicability of getting over the bar at Bideford?—WITNESS: Absolutely impossible.

Referring to the Clovelly lifeboat, WITNESS said she was a pulling and sailing boat launched off a shingle beach. She could be launched in a gale, but not one with the wind force ten.

The inquiry was further adjourned until this afternoon.

© 2021

Lloyd's Register
Foundation

W686-0287