

THE "LISMORE" INQUIRY

Cargo Arrangements.

MYSTERY OF THE SINKING.

From Our Own Correspondent.

DUBLIN, Tuesday.

Mr. Geo. P. Cussen, District Justice, assisted by Captain J. H. Webb and Captain Louis Brady, master mariners, Mr. F. G. Miller, marine engineer, and Mr. W. J. Wares, naval architect, resumed the inquiry here this morning into the circumstances attending the loss of the City of Cork Steam Packet Company's steamer *Lismore*, which foundered on July 10 last at midnight, when 16 miles off the Hook Head, Co. Wexford.

Mr. E. A. Swayne, K.C., and Mr. Costello (instructed by the Chief State Solicitor) appeared for the Department of Industry and Commerce; Mr. A. K. Overend, K.C. (instructed by Messrs. D. & T. Fitzgerald), appeared for the owners.

Mr. E. I. SMYTH, Department of Transport & Marine, said that the derrick which was washed ashore at Roche's Point on July 12 was 31 ft. in length. It seemed to have been a considerable time in the water. Since the inquiry opened, a lifebelt bearing the name *Lismore*, and a number of packing cases bearing the name of "Henry Ford & Sons," had been washed ashore at Wexford coast.

Mr. THOS. O'DONNELL, Superintending Officer of the Department of Agriculture at Cork, stated that he inspected the ship on June 26, and on July 10, he also boarded the vessel. He saw some cargo in No. 1 hold, and some of it was on ballast tanks. Mr. Perry (the supercargo) told him the goods were for Fords, and that there was a very large quantity of them. No. 1 hold was not full.

Mr. MCGOVERN, assistant to the last witness, gave evidence that the regulations of the department concerning the loading of cattle were properly carried out. There were 271 head of cattle, and of these only two, which were bulls, were tied.

THE SCUPPERS.

Mr. HUBERT MORRIS, superintending engineer of the City of Cork Steam Packet Company, stated that he was on board the *Lismore* for 25 minutes on the afternoon of July 10 before she sailed. There was no complaint whatever made then about the scuppers. The only thing said about them was that they were working freely.

Mr. SWAYNE: Were you told that one of Ford's mechanics had to be employed the previous day to clear one of the scuppers?—That is entirely wrong.

Replying to further questions, WITNESS said that the scuppers in this ship were less liable to choke than the ordinary scupper, but all scuppers were liable to choke.

Asked if he had any reason to give why the ship went over, WITNESS said it was a complete mystery, and he could not give any probable reason for the disaster. A thousand conjectures might be made in regard to the matter.

Answering Mr. Overend, representing the owners of the vessel, WITNESS said that he was present at the trials of the ship, and she was satisfactory in every way. Captain Sale was a steady, sober, capable man.

Mr. FRANCIS COUTTS, foreman in the cattle department, City of Cork Steam Packet Company, gave evidence of having superintended the loading of the cattle and said that everything was carried out according to regulation.

DENIS CROWLEY, assistant stevedore in the employment of the owners of the *Lismore*, stated that when the vessel was loaded up at 5.30 on the evening of July 10 she could not take any more cargo as there was no room on board.

THE TRIALS

Captain McCLENNAN, of the City of Cork Steam Packet Company, stated that he took over the *Lismore* from her builders in Ardrossan and was present during her trials with the owners' marine engineer and superintendent. During her trials over a 16-mile course everything proved satisfactory. He took her to Manchester and she showed no tendency to list when going up the canal. In his opinion she was a properly constructed and sound ship and answered her helm without any unusual list. She was built specially for the Wexford trade, being of lighter draught and of greater beam than was usual in ships of her size. He did not notice that she was in any way a "tender" ship, and against a strong tide or wind she would not take any more than an ordinary list.

Mr. COSTELLO: Was she a ship that required a delicate adjustment of the cargo to keep her stable?—No, so long as the ordinary rules of loading were observed.

Can you give an explanation for the foundering of the vessel?—No, I cannot.

Is it not very strange that on the first occasion when cargo was placed on her upper fore and aft decks, she foundered?—It is.

Would the deck cargoes account for it?—Not if there was a counter weight in the holds.

Answering further questions, WITNESS said that he had four able seamen to work the ship. When he took her over that was a sufficient number, but he could have done with more, because, with extra men, they could look after the cleaning of the ship.

Would you agree with Carney that if more able seamen were on board the chance of saving the vessel would have been greater?—I don't.

Answering Mr. Overend, WITNESS said he would not attach much importance to a list of one degree in a cargo boat. Captain Sale was a careful and capable man. The blowing of the whistle was the signal for all hands to come on deck.

The PRESIDENT: Does it not strike you that something should have been done to right the ship between the hours of 8 and 12 midnight?—It does.

Can you assist the Court in any way?—I think they must have been doing something between those hours when there was 2 ft. 6 in. of water on her decks. They must have been trying to get her up again; they probably shifted the cattle.

The PRESIDENT: What would you have done in such circumstances?—I would get her to shore as soon as I could. If I could not do that and if there was a sea I would put her head to it if she was sinking. I would put the cattle overboard, and if there was any danger I would call all hands on deck and get the boats out.

Would you have gone to sea in the *Lismore* with her cargo stowed as it was?—Yes.

The inquiry was again adjourned.

