

# THE LISMORE MYSTERY.

## DERELICT DERRICK WASHED ASHORE.

## PROPERLY CONSTRUCTED AND SOUND SHIP.

### WRECK INQUIRY PROCEEDINGS

At yesterday's sitting of the Free State inquiry into the foundering of the steamer Lismore, there was evidence of the washing ashore on the Wexford coast of a ship's derrick of large dimensions, covered with barnacles but bearing no mark of damage.

There was also the intimation that since the opening of the inquiry there had come ashore some packing cases bearing the name Henry Ford and Sons, as well as a lifebelt with the name Lismore upon it.

Mr. Herbert Morris, superintendent engineer of the City of Cork Steam Packet Co., said after considering the question thoroughly, he could not form any opinion as to what caused the vessel to go over. "It is an absolute mystery to my mind," he said.

Both this witness and Captain McClenaghan, who commanded the Lismore on her trial trip from Ardrossan, spoke of Captain Sayle who was her master on the last voyage as a sober and steady man, who would take the utmost care both of the ship and the crew.

The latter witness said he could not form an opinion as to the cause of the disaster.

## DISCOVERY OF WRECKAGE THE STOWAGE OF CATTLE.

(FROM OUR OWN REPORTER.)

DUBLIN, Tuesday.

THE official inquiry into the circumstances of the loss of the Cork Steam Packet Co.'s steamer Lismore was resumed in Dublin Castle to-day before Mr. G. P. Cussen, assisted by four assessors. (The initial proceedings were fully reported in Tuesday's *Journal of Commerce*.)

At the outset to-day a witness attached to the Department of Transport and Marine gave evidence of the drifting into Wexford of a ship's derrick, thirty-six feet long by one foot in diameter and

tapering to about ten inches. It came ashore at half-past eight p.m. on Saturday, July 12th, about two and a half miles from Roche's Point Light, bearing west. It was completely covered with barnacles, and had evidently been in the water for a very long time. It was not damaged in any way.

Since the inquiry started another portion of wreckage had been found; a lifebelt bearing the name Lismore and a large number of portions of packing cases with the name Henry Ford and Sons had also come ashore on the Wexford coast.

Thomas O'Donnell, superintending officer of the Agricultural Department of Cork, spoke as to inspecting the Lismore and finding that the pens on board complied with regulations and

Timothy McGovern, a ship inspector, referred to the manner in which the two hundred and seventy-one cattle were stowed; of these only two bulls were tied.

### SCUPPERS AND CHOKING.

#### ENGINEER'S EXAMINATION OF VESSEL.

Herbert Morris, superintendent engineer for the Cork Steam Packet Co., stated that he examined the Lismore on 10th July before she left for Manchester. If there was anything wrong with the machinery or the vessel generally a report would in the ordinary course be made to him. On this occasion no such report was made. On a previous occasion when there was a report as to the scupper being choked he instructed the plumber to clear it, and this was done on the same day.

On July 10th the only remark he heard about the scuppers was that they were very good. He thought these scuppers were less likely to choke than the ordinary ones. The holes were half an inch. He saw her going out; she had a very slight list to port which he attributed to the cattle.

As to whether the carrying of cargo on deck would contribute to her going over he said it was a matter of degree and distribution. He did not think eight tons would have any great effect so long as it was evenly distributed.

Mr. Swaine.—Can you form any opinion as to what caused the Lismore to go over?

Witness.—It is an absolute mystery to me. When discussing it with any of your friends did you formulate any opinion?—None whatever. You might make a thousand conjectures. It is no use trying to put forward a solution; the whole thing is wrapped in mystery, added the witness.

Witness went on to explain that although the return showed 55 tons of coal in the bunkers he had had measurement made and found there were 68 tons. The consumption worked out at 14 tons daily. The stability returns, he told Mr. Swaine, would not indicate that the Lismore was a tender ship.

Replying to Mr. Overend, for the owners of the vessel, witness said he was present at the Lismore's trials when she behaved extremely well in every respect. In addition to the scuppers there were free ports on either side of the main deck. His impression of Captain Sayle, the master, was that he was a sober, steady man.

Other witnesses were called to give evidence as to the manner in which the vessel was loaded.

## WHAT HAPPENED ON VESSEL'S TRIAL.

### "NOT A TENDER SHIP."

Captain McClenaghan, in the employ of the City of Cork Steam Packet Co., described to the court what took place when he and a marine engineer and superintendent accompanied the Lismore during her trial trip from Ardrossan. During the time he was in charge of her there was nothing unusual about her. "She was," said he, "a properly constructed sound ship." Although she was specially constructed for the Wexford trade she would not take a list with a wind or strong tide. She was not what he would call a tender ship. Finding a vessel loaded as the Lismore was and having a list to port he would consider it might be due to the difficulty of distributing the cattle according to their weight. There might be one fatter and heavier than another. "As an expert," said counsel, "can you assist the court in giving an opinion as to the cause of her foundering?"

"No, I cannot," was the reply. "I do not think the cargo on deck would affect it, because there would be weights down below to counteract the weight on top."

In answer to Mr. Overend, K.C., he said a list of one degree, such as was spoken of in the case of the Lismore when she left Cork, would not be such as would be paid attention to. It would only be visible in the mast and not in the ship herself.

### THE MASTER'S CAREFULNESS.

Speaking of Captain Sayle, whom he had known for a good many years, he said he was a careful man, who might be expected to take every care of the vessel and of his crew.

"Do you think," asked Mr. Overend, "that if Captain Sayle was apprehensive as to the safety of his vessel he would have ordered all hands on deck?"

Witness said: "He blew the whistle, I think, and that was the signal for all hands on deck." Witness added that on her trials he had special interest in the Lismore because she was to go on the Wexford run and he was to have command of her.

### THE LIST.

Answering Mr. Horgan he said if the Lismore's list was seen from the shore and commented upon on July 10 that would entail a list of more than one degree.

Questioned by the court he said he could not give any suggestion as to how the water got on the deck on the night of the wreck. Having regard to his knowledge of the master it was his belief that something was done to try to remedy the trouble.

Asked what he would have done when the water was even a foot deep he said he would get the vessel to shore as soon as possible, and failing that, if there was a sea, he would put her head on to it. He would have called all hands on deck as soon as he saw there was any danger. If necessary he would have given orders for the cattle to be released.

He gave it as his view that as a master mariner of experience he would certainly have gone to sea with a vessel stowed as this was. If a vessel exactly similar were now in his command he would most certainly put to sea with a deckload such as the evidence showed the Lismore had.

### VESSEL'S COST AND INSURANCE.

A number of employees of Lismore's owners and a superintendent gave evidence as to the actual loading operation on the Lismore on July 10, and the secretary of the company said the actual amount she had cost to date was £37,250. She was insured for £30,000, and he would calculate her value as £37,000 odd, as she was practically new. His firm had had her built specially for the Wexford cattle trade, which they were anxious to develop.

The inquiry was adjourned until to-morrow (Wednesday).