

"FAMAGUSTA"

At an interview this morning Mr. Stanley Pitts, Solicitor to the Ministry of Transport, stated that it had been the intention of the Ministry to commence the formal Enquiry into the loss of the above ship on March 1st, but owing to some difficulty being experienced in securing the attendance of the Master of the "EMPIRE PLOVER", this may have to be postponed.

It was pointed out that unless an individual or body is a party to an Enquiry they cannot be made to contribute to the costs of the Enquiry, such enforced contribution being regarded by the public as a sign of guilt. Mr. Pitts stated that it is not now the intention of the Ministry to make the Society a party to the Enquiry, and he suggested that the Society should not itself request to be so made. At the same time, he advises the Society to be represented by counsel with a watching brief, ready to become an active brief if any charge is levelled at the Society, or if the Ministry are compelled to make the Society a party at a later stage in the Enquiry.

The Wreck Commissioner will be Mr. Hayward K.C.

Mr. Hawkins, the Ministry's Surveyor preparing the case, was also interviewed, and suggested that the Society's witnesses should be prepared to deal with the following points:-

The efficiency of the welding of the new structure, which from evidence, appears to have failed. How did the Surveyor satisfy himself as to the efficiency of the welding? Was he satisfied with the new Medway Steam Packet Co's facilities for welding, with the electrodes used and with the welder himself? Did he actually watch the latter at work? Was his survey confined to a visual inspection after completion of the welding and was the latter tested in any way? The Society's Rules regarding welding should be available.

The Significance of the Class "AI" as distinct from "100 AI".

Has the Society any knowledge of when the aftermost wing buoyancy tanks on port and starboard sides were divided by transverse bulkheads and the afterpart converted into oil-fuel bunkers?

An alteration may have been made to the pumping arrangements after the latter had been approved by the Society, which might have prevented the forward bilges being drained by the pump in the engine room. Is the Society aware of this?

The Ministry is in possession of a tracing in the form of a fly to the pumping plan, from which it appears that the screw-down valve on the tank top in the forward store closing the drain into the duct-keel was not fitted, but that a sump with a non-return valve was substituted. Would this arrangement have satisfied the Society?

At present, the following Surveyors will be required to attend:

Messrs. Lloyd Roberts, Sellex and Tickell.

2nd
8th February, 1949



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Foundation