

Veohis

The following comments are submitted on this letter:-

Page 4. The draught corresponding to the freeboard assigned by the Committee is 26 ft. $8\frac{1}{4}$ ins. This draught is draught extreme.

Page 5. The door referred to in the last paragraph of this page is not an unusual fitting in a vessel of this kind. The position of the door as shewn on the approved plans is such that its bottom edge is fully 6 feet from the waterline. No plan of this door was submitted for approval.

(K) If it is true that it was known that considerable leakage was taking place around this door, and that the officers' opinion was that serious difficulty would have been caused if the door had become submerged, then it was clearly advisable that immediate steps should have been taken to obtain access to the door and to render it watertight. *

Page 6. It is a little difficult to understand the construction described in the second paragraph of this page, and in the paragraphs following. It is thought that the statement "two booby hatches with companionways leading to the shelter deck" really refers to two hatchways which were constructed on the top of No.3 hatchway, closely adjacent to the tonnage opening, and that the expression "leading to the shelter deck" means "leading to the space below the shelter deck". The so-called "booby hatch" has been fitted in vessels carrying steerage passengers in the 'tweendecks, and provides a means of access for these passengers to the open air. The booby hatch is ^{usually} of substantial construction, and is supposed to be as strong as the wood covers of the ordinary hatchway itself.

The watertight doors referred to at the end of paragraph 2 on this page are those which, it is assumed, should have been fitted to the openings in the intermediate bulkheads in this tonnage-exempted space. These openings are never fitted with watertight doors.



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The height of the coal hatch coamings referred to at the bottom of this page and on the following page, namely 9 inches, is in accordance with the requirements of the Society's Rules. This space, however, being an open space from the point of view of tonnage measurement, that is to say, the superstructure not being intact, these openings should have been provided with hatch covers and battening arrangements.

It is stated that it must be understood that "as soon as "water finds its way into the shelter deck bunker to a depth "of more than ten inches, it inevitably finds ~~its~~ way to the " 'tweendeck bunker and thence to the fire room." This assumes, of course, that no covers were in place, and it may be that this was so, for the reason stated, namely, the convenience of trimming coal to the boiler room; but it also neglects the influence of the scuppers which should have been provided at the side of the vessel in accordance with the regulations for a tonnage-exempted space.

Page 7. The regulations would permit of the bulkheads referred to in the second paragraph being provided with uncovered openings.

The statement in the third paragraph of this page would be equally true of a cargo hatchway itself if the covers were carried away.

No information is available in regard to the so-called "lightly constructed wooden doors" in the booby hatches.

In paragraph 4 it is stated that the tonnage opening leading into the starboard shelter deck bunker had no coaming. The regulations permit this tonnage opening to be so constructed, that is to say, the storm boards or other means of closing adopted may extend down to the deck.

Pages 8 & 9. The supposition as to the cause of the disaster advanced on these pages may be summarised as follows:-

The so-called lightly constructed doors of the booby hatches were injured or carried away, and water in large volume found its way into the space below the shelter deck, from which, after it



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had attained a certain depth, it flowed into the spaces immediately below, including the fire room.

If this theory is accepted, it is rather difficult to understand how this process - which must have taken a considerable time, and which must have been ~~immediately~~ evident from the start - should not have been stopped at once. The weather on the Sunday, it is said, was not severe, but on Saturday and at the latest on Sunday morning the list produced by this entering water was observed, and the supposed leakage started at a point easily seen, and could presumably have been easily dealt with.

According to the facts as stated in this letter, no attempt whatever was made to deal with a dangerous condition of affairs which must have been evident to the ship's company, in circumstances which would easily have permitted of the necessary action being taken.

Page 10. Some investigations of a general character are now being made into the stability of this vessel by Mr. Watt.

The remarks in regard to the necessity for the Owners being made aware of the ship's metacentric height will not meet with unqualified agreement. It is true that recently the practice has been extended of communicating ^{to the Owners} the ship's metacentric height, together with other elementary data connected with stability, but it is not universally agreed that any good purpose is served by doing so.

JW
W.D. / 8.1.29



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