

## LOST HARTLEY.

### BOARD OF TRADE INQUIRY OPENED.

#### LIVERPOOL LINER'S RESCUE EFFORTS.

[FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.]

MIDDLESBROUGH, Thursday.

THE Board of Trade inquiry into the loss of the Hartley, the Tyneside vessel abandoned in the English Channel and which subsequently foundered, opened here to-day. The Stipendiary magistrate (Mr. P. Griffith Jones) presided, and the assessors were Captain D. F. MacDonald, Mr. J. Carmichael, and Rear-Admiral Booty, C.B., M.V.O. Mr. C. B. Fenwick represented the owners, and Captain E. V. Hugo, of Middlesbrough, agent, Merchant Service Guild, watched the inquiry on behalf of the relatives of the master, Captain W. Pearson.

Mr. Burton, for the Board of Trade, intimated that the inquiry would probably last till Saturday. He explained that the Hartley on voyage was bound from Barry to Ghent with a cargo of small Welsh coal, her carrying capacity being 3,335 tons. The Hartley was practically a new vessel of the self-trimming type, built by Smiths' Dock, South Bank, and classed A1 at Lloyd's.

Before sailing she was seen by the Board of Trade surveyor, and there was a margin of one and a quarter to one and a half inches between draft and permissible load.

#### HATCHES RIPPED OFF.

The vessel was all right till midnight of November 26, but after that she encountered a gale from the south-west and seas swept the deck. About 4 a.m. she began to ship water, and at 5.20 shipped heavy water in No. 3 hatch. The boat then heeled to, when it was found that the tarpaulin on No. 3 hatch was ripped. Though repaired and additional rope lashed over further damage occurred. No. 3 hatch was then swept overboard, followed later by other hatches. In about fifteen minutes No. 3 hold was full, and the vessel made a list to starboard of about 20 degrees.

At 9.35 a S.O.S. signal was sent out. The starboard lifeboat was launched and 19 of the crew abandoned the vessel, one able seaman

being drowned. The Blue Funnel liner Machaon reached the Hartley, and the lifeboat was being drawn alongside when a heavy sea capsized it. There was a consensus of opinion that every member of the Hartley's crew had lifeboats on and discipline was maintained. Only two men were saved. The Hartley foundered just after 11 a.m.

Summing up, Mr. Burton referred to a series of questions to be decided by the inquiry. Among the points were:—

Whether the construction of the hatchways and the security of hatch covers were such as to ensure safety?

When she left Barry was she in a seaworthy condition, was she properly loaded, and what measures were taken to prevent shifting, and what was the cause of water getting into the hold?

#### PILOT'S EVIDENCE.

Mr. F. W. H. Booker, of Barry, who piloted the Hartley from Barry Dock to sea, testified to the vessel's seaworthiness. In his opinion it was over half an inch light.

Captain Edward A. Dodd, master of the Machaon, spoke to receiving distress signals and the preparations that were made to effect the rescue of the Hartley's crew. He thought it would have been throwing away the lives of his own crew to have launched a lifeboat from his own vessel owing to the violence of the wind and sea.

Mr. H. P. Hetherington, chief officer of the Machaon, said a lifebuoy was thrown to a man of colour, but he was unable to grasp it. Only one man seemed to have sufficient vitality to put his arm through the loop.

Captain E. T. Smith, of the steamer Alberta, which also stood by, said his crew threw lines, but the Hartley's crew were lifeless.

#### SHIPYARD MANAGER'S EVIDENCE.

Mr. James Wm. Cairns, shipyard manager for Smiths' Dock Co., gave evidence that the Hartley was built last year. She was constructed in considerable excess of requirements. The firm had built one other ship to the same specification, and another similar boat was now nearing completion.

In reply to Mr. Burton, witness said if the Court of Inquiry so desired the firm would be pleased to allow of an inspection of the vessel now on the stocks.

Questioned at length regarding the technical details, he agreed that the strength and quality of tarpaulin on hatches was an important matter in considering the safety of the ship. In the case of the Hartley the tarpaulin had only been in use two months. He did not know what usage it had been subjected to since leaving the shipyard.

The inquiry adjourned until to-morrow (Friday).



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