

"WILLIAM AND EMMA."

THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1894.

IN the matter of an Inquiry before Commander WARREN FREDERICK CABORNE, C.B., R.D., R.N.R., Inspector to the Board of Trade, as to the circumstances attending the capsizing of the sailing ship "WILLIAM AND EMMA," at or near Salcombe Bar, Devonshire, which occurred about 11 a.m. on the 27th of October, 1916.

Report.

SIR,

I have the honour to inform you that in pursuance of my appointment from the Board of Trade, under Section 728 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, dated the 2nd day of January, 1917, I held an Inquiry into the above casualty at the Town Hall, Salcombe, in the County of Devon, on the 10th day of January, 1917.

Mr. George C. Vaux conducted the proceedings on behalf of the solicitor to the Board of Trade (Sir R. Ellis Cunliffe), and Lieutenant Keppel H. Foote, late R.N., Acting Chief Inspector of Lifeboats to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, represented that corporation; while Dr. W. Cock Prest and Mr. C. E. Turner, respectively Chairman and Honorary Secretary of the Local Lifeboat Committee, were also present in court.

The "William and Emma" was a lifeboat, built in 1903, by the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company, Limited, Blackwall, London (the order being given on the 20th of June, 1903, and the vessel completed in every detail on the 7th of April, 1904), and was owned by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, having its principal offices at 22, Charing Cross Road, in the City of Westminster.

She was of the Liverpool type, and non-self-righting, and for sail-power had a jib and two lug-sails (main-sail and mizen), the whole canvas area equalling 276 square feet; while the centre of effort of her sails was 1 foot 11 inches forward of the centre of the lateral resistance of the submerged portion of her hull. She was also fitted to pull twelve oars, with all six thwarts double-banked, and could be steered by means of either a yoke or a tiller.

Her principal dimensions were as follows:—Length over all, 35 feet 0½ inch; extreme beam to outside of planking, 10 feet; depth amidships from bottom of keel to gunwale capping, 4 feet 2½ inches; and depth to top of end boxes at stem-head and stern-post, respectively 5 feet 11½ inches and 5 feet 5½ inches.

Short air chambers were fitted above deck at the bow and stern up to the gunwale, the length of the end boxes from inside the respective posts being forward 4 feet and aft 3 feet 7½ inches. The height of the bulkhead of the same above the deck was, forward 3 feet 0¼ inch and aft 2 feet 6½ inches; the width of the end boxes at gunwale being, forward 5 feet 9 inches and aft 6 feet 10 inches, and the width below the horizontal line 3 inches, both forward and aft.

The various heights were as under:—The lower side of the skin to the upper side of the deck, 1 foot 11½ inches; the upper side of the deck to the upper side of the thwarts, 1 foot 2 inches; and from the upper side of the thwarts to the gunwale capping, 8½ inches—8½ inches being at the lowest part.

The keel and keelson were constructed of Canadian elm, and the stem, stern-post, deadwoods, and aprons were of English oak grown to form.

The keel was 4½ inches in depth, being 3½ inches of wood and a ¾-inch iron band, the latter weighing 2 cwt. 3 qrs. and 6 lbs.

Two centre-boards, or drop-keels, each 9 feet long, made of mild steel plate 5/16-inch thick, having a drop of over 2 feet, were placed in steel trunks.

Bilge keels of Canadian elm 15 feet 6 inches long and 3 inches in depth were fitted on each side at the

turn of the bilge, and hand battens were fitted on the bottom for the men to hold on by, should the boat capsize. I understand that the placing of these hand battens is an outcome of the inquiry I held into the capsizing of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's Lifeboat "Selina," off Ryde, Isle of Wight, which casualty occurred on the 1st of January, 1907, when two members of her crew were drowned.

The timbers of the "William and Emma" were of bent Canadian elm, 1½ inch by ¾ inch, spaced 12 inches to 14 inches apart.

The planking consisted of Honduras mahogany in two thicknesses of ¾ inch each, and not more than 6 inches broad, both worked diagonally at an angle of approximately 45 degrees to the keel. The planks crossed one another at right angles in the body of the boat, and stout unbleached calico, thickly coated with white lead, was worked between the two skins, which were fastened together with closely spaced copper nails, clenched inside on copper roves or washers.

There was a water-tight deck, 26 feet 8 inches long with 5½ inches of freeboard at the lowest point amidships, fitted between the end air chambers. It was of Honduras mahogany, laid in hatches, made in the same way as the skin planking (double diagonal) and secured by brass screws in rabbets in the deck frames or beams.

The bulkheads of the end boxes were also of mahogany, one set of planks being vertical and the others horizontal.

Six thwarts were provided, and buoyancy air cases at the sides were fitted above the deck.

The whole of the space in the hold below deck was filled with wooden air cases to give buoyancy in the event of the boat being stove in. There were 63 cases in the hold and on deck, each virtually constituting a water-tight compartment. The buoyancy air cases were constructed from selected white pine, protected from rot by a coating of jodelite inside. The outsides were covered with stout unbleached calico ironed on to marine glue prepared for the purpose.

Ten self-acting non-return delivery valves were fitted on deck to discharge water, breaking on board, through the bottom of the boat.

A solid cork fender, pear shaped, covered with canvas, 12 inches deep and 6 inches wide, was worked round each side of the vessel.

Two water-ballast tanks, each 16 inches wide, with a total length of 20 feet, were fitted in the centre line of the boat. These water-ballast tanks were constructed entirely of Honduras mahogany, and were furnished with pumps, plugs, etc., for admitting and pumping out the water. The dimensions of the tanks were, fore tank, 8 feet 7½ inches, and after tank, 8 feet 9 inches by 1 foot 4 inches by 1 foot 7½ inches. Steel trunks for the drop keels were fitted in the tanks.

The lifeboat was provided with the usual equipment, including anchor, cable, and drogue.

It should be noted that the Royal National Lifeboat Institution possessed thirty-four lifeboats of the Liverpool type up to the end of 1915, of which seventeen were about the same dimensions as the "William and Emma," while eleven of them were fitted with water-ballast tanks in the same way that she was. Boats not fitted with water-ballast tanks would, as a rule, be launched from slipways.

Before being sent away from London, the "William and Emma" was, on the 18th of March, 1904, subjected to the usual harbour trials for draught of water, under different conditions, and for stability.

The weight of the boat in a light condition was about 3.75 tons; with crew and gear in place, 5.35 tons; and with .893 of a ton of water-ballast, 6.243 tons; the draught under the latter circumstances being 1 foot 9¼ inches forward and 1 foot 11 inches aft, giving a mean draught of 1 foot 10¼ inches.

With the crew and gear in place, and the water-ballast tanks full of water, it took 30 men—dummies, each averaging about 154 lbs., and technically known as "dead men," being mainly used for the purpose of trials—on the gunwale to bring it awash; and with the tanks empty twenty-nine men were necessary for the same purpose. In order to bring the deck awash under identical conditions, thirty-nine men

were required on the gunwale with the tanks full, and forty-nine men with the tanks empty.

The official record of the harbour trial was "Trial quite satisfactory."

Mr. Felix Rubie, surveyor to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, who gave evidence at the Inquiry, produced curves of stability calculated for a similar boat, and stated that the "William and Emma" was very stable.

I have gone very minutely into details with regard to her construction, and other matters, as being illustrative of the great care and forethought manifested in the designing and preparation of these sea-going and life-saving craft for the perilous and beneficent work in which they are employed.

I may here mention that, on the morning after the Inquiry, accompanied by Mr. Vaux, Mr. Keppel Foote and Mr. Rubie, I went to Hope Cove and personally inspected the Institution's lifeboat stationed there—one of an exactly similar description to the ill-fated Salcombe vessel, and was much impressed with her roomy, solid, and seaworthy appearance.

A few words should now be devoted to the system of management of the life-boats belonging to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

Subject, of course, to the supreme control of the Committee of Management of the Institution, a Station Branch, controlled by a Local Committee, is established at the different Lifeboat Stations, the Honorary Secretary, the chief executive officer, being primarily entrusted with the responsible duty of the management of the lifeboat establishment and crew, and thus he is, in a special sense, the representative of the Institution as well as of the Branch.

To ensure that the crew shall be physically in an efficient state for the proper performance of their important and arduous duties, it is laid down in Paragraph 35 of the Institution's Regulations that: "No man incapacitated by age, infirmity, ill-health, or other cause, shall be allowed to proceed to sea in the boat."

Under Paragraph 37, the appointment of the coxswain, second coxswain, etc., rests with the Local Committee, who are required to consult the crew in the selection of the coxswain and second coxswain.

Paragraph 44 provides that: "Whether the boat has been out on service or not, she is to be taken afloat for exercise, fully manned, once in each quarter, and preferably in rough weather."

While Paragraph 46 states that: "Whenever a new boat is to be supplied to a station, the coxswain and crew are to be fully consulted as to the type of such boat, within the limitations imposed by the natural conditions of the station or by the existing provision for the accommodation of a boat. Facilities will be afforded to a deputation of the crew to inspect and, if practicable, try the various types of lifeboats before arriving at a decision."

In 1903, the lifeboat at Salcombe, which was on the self-righting principle, was getting old, and an opportunity having arisen for her replacement, the Committee of Management decided to replace her. Accordingly, in pursuance of the regulation just quoted, the then coxswain, James Distin (who was coxswain for twenty-six years up to the time of his retirement some six years ago), and two other members of the crew, Edward Quick and Edward Dare, inspected and tested lifeboats at Coverack and Looe. The Coverack boat was of the Liverpool type, and non-self-righting, her dimensions being 35 feet by 10 feet; while the Looe boat was a self-righter, 35 feet by 8 feet 6 inches. As the result of these investigations, application was made for a non-self-righter of the Liverpool type, 35 feet by 10 feet, and in response to that request the "William and Emma" was supplied, and she was sent to her station at Salcombe on the 3rd of May, 1904.

A return put in shows that between the time of her arrival at Salcombe and the date of her loss, she had been inspected upon twenty-two occasions by the District Inspector of Lifeboats, and had been launched for exercise during nineteen of those inspections. Upon one of those occasions, the 26th of November, 1907, she was exercised in a moderate S.W. gale, force 6 to 7, when there was a heavy sea on Salcombe Bar, and the report of this trial was that the boat behaved admirably both under sail and oars.

As there will be more hereafter in the narrative of the casualty about Salcombe Bar, it may be well here to state that the "Channel" pilot describes it as being a ridge of sand extending from the western shore a quarter of a mile above the Great Eelstone (a great overhanging rock) to Lambury Point, on the eastern shore; at low water spring tides, there are 7 feet of water on the leading mark, with less water on both sides. A heavy sea breaks on this bar during southerly gales, and if intending to cross it at such a time allowance must be made for the sand of the sea. The lead is the best guide, and having passed the bar in either direction, the water deepens immediately. When the sea is smooth, vessels of 20 feet draught can cross the bar at high water, springs, and of 16 feet draught at neaps.

The "William and Emma" had been launched for service five times prior to the date of the casualty that formed the subject of this Inquiry.

About 1.15 a.m. of the 4th of August, 1907, a message was received at Salcombe that a small vessel (subsequently ascertained to be the ketch "Bona," of Ipswich, 80 tons, laden with coal) was ashore off Prawle Point. The crew of the lifeboat were summoned and the boat was launched and proceeded to the scene of the wreck. There was a strong breeze and a rough sea, also a dense fog, and it was very dark. Upon arrival at the place of the casualty, it was found that the vessel was under water, with her masts and sails still standing. There was no trace of the crew, so, after communicating with the Coastguard at Prawle Point, the lifeboat stood by until daylight, when, the fog having lifted, search was made along the coast for the missing men. On returning to Salcombe it was ascertained that the crew of the "Bona" had landed at Dartmouth in their own boat. Upon the occasion of this service the "William and Emma" was reported to have behaved well.

At 8.10 p.m. of the 12th March, 1909, a telephone message was received at Salcombe that a vessel (which proved to be the long line fishing steamer, "Eagle," of Boulogne) was ashore near Lannacombe and was exhibiting signals of distress. The crew were summoned, and the lifeboat was launched and proceeded towards the stranded craft. Upon arrival at Woodcombe Point (about half way between Prawle Point and Start Point) a small steamer was discovered on the rocks. The lifeboat could not get alongside as there was not sufficient water and there was much surf. It was blowing a moderate N.E. gale, the sea was moderate, there was rain and snow, and it was very cold. Having seen the French crew landed by means of the rocket apparatus, the "William and Emma" returned to Salcombe. The report was that in this service, which was made under sail, she behaved well.

At 7.30 a.m. of the 6th of February, 1910, it was reported to Salcombe that there was a vessel (which turned out to be the ketch "Sunflower," of Lowestoft) ashore near Lannacombe. The lifeboat was launched and proceeded to the vicinity of the disaster and discovered a ketch-rigged trawler stranded on the rocks. The lifeboat went alongside and asked whether assistance was required. The reply was a request that she would stand by until the skipper of the trawler knew whether his ship could be towed afloat. The lifeboat stood by for three hours, when, tugs having refloated the "Sunflower," she returned to Salcombe. During this service, there was a strong westerly breeze and a moderate sea, and it was thick with rain. The report was that the "William and Emma" behaved well.

At 7.30 p.m. of the 20th September, 1912, information was received that a pleasure boat containing three visitors to Salcombe was missing and had been seen during the afternoon near the Mewstone. It was then blowing a moderate easterly gale, and it was suggested that the pleasure boat had been blown to leeward of the Mewstone and was unable to return. The lifeboat was launched at 8.30 p.m. and proceeded to the westward under easy canvas, and carefully searched the coast as far as the Greystone, but without success. Upon reaching the Greystone, she commenced to return, making short tacks, and made Salcombe Pier at 1 a.m. of the following day. At 5 a.m. of the 21st of September the lifeboat again

went out, and cruised off the shore between Bolt Head and Bolt Tail, but not finding any trace of the missing pleasure boat went back to Salcombe at 8.30 a.m. of the same day. Again the report was that the "William and Emma" had behaved well both under sail and oars.

At 10.30 p.m. of the 21st of October, 1912, the Salcombe Coastguard Station received a telephone message from Prawle Point that a vessel bearing south of that place was burning flares. At 11.18 p.m. a further message from Prawle Point said: "There is a little vessel to the southward still burning flares, almost sure that they are distress signals." At 11.40 p.m. another message was received from Prawle Point that it was still thought that the lights seen were signals of distress, and that they seemed to flare up as if oil were being used. To shorten a comparatively long story, the lifeboat was launched at 11.50 p.m., sailed for about seven miles in a southerly direction, burnt white lights, cruised about, discovered nothing, and returned to Salcombe about 4 a.m. of the 22nd of October. During the night there was a moderate gale from the north-west, a rough sea, and rain squalls. The service was performed under both oars and sails, the mainsail and mizen being single-reefed, and it was officially reported that the boat had behaved well.

So much for the previous history of the "William and Emma," and I now come to the events in connection with her loss and that of so many valuable lives—lives that can ill be spared at any time, but more especially so during the present great national crisis.

Shortly after 5 a.m. of the 27th of October, 1916, a signal of distress was observed at the Coastguard Station at Prawle Point as being shown in the neighbourhood of Lang Point. At the time, it was blowing a whole gale from the S.W., was squally and pitch dark, and there was a heavy sea running.

Mr. Leonard A. C. May, Chief Officer of Coastguard, gave orders to telephone to Salcombe for the lifeboat to be sent to call out the men of the Coastguard at Prawle, to telephone to Coastguard at Lannacombe for assistance and for the summoning of the life-saving party. He also dispatched a messenger to the farm house where the life-saving apparatus was kept, as telephonic communication there owing to the state of the weather was interrupted. He also burnt a blue light to show the vessel in distress that assistance was coming and proceeded to the scene of the casualty, when he found that the topsail schooner, "Western Lass," of Plymouth, 99 tons, coal laden, and on a voyage from Swansea to Caen, had stranded in a sandy cove to the westward of the Mag Rocks.

The sea was exceptionally bad and was breaking over the vessel, the masts of which were shaking every time she was struck.

Upon arrival of the rocket and mortar apparatus, the very first rocket fired successfully effected communication with the schooner, and the crew were safely taken off the wreck, the last man being landed at 6.52 a.m.

At 7.40 a.m., Mr. May returned to the Coastguard station, he having previously despatched a messenger there (who arrived about 7.20) to inform Salcombe that the crew of the vessel in distress had been saved.

There had been considerable difficulty in getting the message from Prawle Point through to Salcombe that morning; in fact, it took from 5.15 to 5.50 to do so, owing to some portion of the line being out of order. On the other hand, Lannacombe was communicated with at once, without any trouble.

The first warning was received at Salcombe at 5.50 a.m., and the "William and Emma" was launched at 6.50 a.m.

She had a full crew (as per list), all her equipment was on board, the water-ballast tanks were full, and each man wore his life-jacket. It was blowing very hard from the S.W., the tide was about one hour ebb, and there was a very bad sea on the bar, which was crossed under oars. The drop keels were then lowered, and sail, consisting of reefed jib, double-reefed mainsail, and reefed mizen, was made.

When the lifeboat was about 2½ miles off Prawle Point the "Western Lass" was sighted ashore, and when she had got within about 1½ miles of the stranded

vessel it was seen that the latter was close to the land within reach of the rocket and mortar life-saving apparatus, and that no men were visible. Even if the distressed crew had been still on board their ship, the lifeboat would have been unable to approach sufficiently near to render any assistance.

When off Prawle Point, looking at the state of the weather, there was some little discussion as to whether it would be better to make for Dartmouth or to return to Salcombe. The boat had behaved well, and it was the opinion of all that they would be able to reach their home station in safety.

Prawle Point was weathered in about four tacks, the wind being still the same. When off Gammon Head the mizen was lowered, and when in the neighbourhood of a place known as Jones' Wall, on the east side of Salcombe Bay, another stretch outward was taken, and then the boat stood in towards the bar, which, when approached, seemed too dangerous to cross.

Accordingly, the "William and Emma" stood off again for about a couple of miles, and then stood in again. The drop keels were raised, the after one completely, but the forward one jammed before it was right up, and was secured in that position.

The weather was the same, the tide was about four hours ebb, and the condition of the bar appeared to have improved. Therefore, it was determined to attempt the crossing.

The boat was now heading about straight for the bar (about north) and she was about S. by W. of its centre.

The drogue was put out, the mainsail lowered, and the jib hauled down, but before the mast was down, or the oars brought into use, the coxswain shouted out to "Mind the life-lines," and a heavy sea struck the "William and Emma" on her port quarter and turned her right over, her position at the time being from one quarter to half a mile outside Salcombe Bar and near the Eelstone Rocks. Three or four of the crew got back to the boat, which was drifting to the north-eastward, but were washed away again. It is stated that the sea was in a perfect boil, and one of the survivors was washed away at least three times.

The "William and Emma" drifted ashore, and was smashed to pieces a few yards west of Jones' Wall, and about half a mile east of Lambury Point.

To return to the Coastguard Station at Prawle Point. When the crew of the "Western Lass" had been landed, an attempt was made to communicate that fact to Salcombe in order to prevent the despatch of the lifeboat, but it is stated that the telephone did not work properly owing to a branch of a tree having blown across the wires. But even if immediate communication had been possible it would have been too late, as the lifeboat had been launched and was on its way to the scene of the wreck.

At 7.40 a.m., when the chief officer returned to the station, the lifeboat was then bearing approximately W.S.W. and heading about S.E. Both he and Albert E. Luckin, leading boatman of the Coastguard, agreed that she seemed to be making good weather of it and appeared to be well handled.

Mr. May stated that he had no means of communicating with the lifeboat by day, although he had green lights for night signals. He did think of using the semaphore in order to inform the lifeboat's crew that the "Western Lass's" men had been safely landed, but came to the conclusion that none of the members would understand this method of signalling. As a matter of fact, I understand that one person did.

Under the circumstances of this casualty, the matter appears to be more or less immaterial, but I am informed that the Royal National Lifeboat Institution is anxious that its crews should acquire a competent knowledge of the semaphore, and I would strongly support the view that instruction should be given in this subject, which might easily be carried out at the various Coastguard Stations.

Mr. May watched the "William and Emma" constantly until she capsized, except during a rain squall. On her return, she cleared Prawle Point at 8.25 a.m., and was making good speed and good weather towards Salcombe Bar. Then rain intervened. The Log of the station states that she was all right at 10.20 a.m., and that between 10.20 a.m.

and 10.40 a.m. she was seen with her sails down, and that at 10.40 a.m. she had capsized.

Mr. May walked along the cliff with some of his men in the hope of being able to rescue life, and observed two men, Edward W. Distin and William Johnson, clinging to a rock about thirty feet from the shore. Other assistance also arrived from Salcombe, and the two persons were rescued from their perilous position. The remainder of the crew lost their lives, many, if not all, of the bodies being subsequently recovered.

The following is a list of the crew who manned the Salcombe lifeboat on the 27th of October, 1916 :—

Samuel Distin (coxswain)	-	Drowned.
Peter Foale (secd. coxswain)	-	Drowned.
William Johnson	-	Saved.
Peter Foale, Jr.	-	Drowned.
William Foale	-	Drowned.
James Cove	-	Drowned.
Albert Distin	-	Drowned.
Francis Cudd	-	Drowned.
Thomas Putt	-	Drowned.
John Cudd	-	Drowned.
James Canham	-	Drowned.
Albert E. Wood	-	Drowned.
William Wakeham Lamble	-	Drowned.
Edwin Distin	-	Saved.
John Ashley Cook	-	Drowned.

It is important to state that notwithstanding the catastrophe that befell the "William and Emma," various witnesses expressed their unabated confidence in her. For instance, the previously mentioned James Distin (brother of the drowned coxswain, who succeeded him upon his retirement), who headed the deputation that chose her from among other types of boats—one reason being that the non-righters then went to windward better than the self-righters, owing to their end boxes being lower and holding less wind—thought "she was a real good seaworthy boat," and added that he had never heard anyone say anything against her, but, on the contrary, that all the members of the crew had praised her up. He also said that he had never seen worse weather at Salcombe, or a worse sea on the bar, than that experienced on the 27th of October, 1916.

Edward William Distin, one of the two survivors and now the new coxswain of the station, stated that he still had every confidence in the old boat, did not think they could get a better, and wished it were possible to have her back again. He also expressed the opinion that the big sea by which she was struck would have capsized any boat.

William Johnson, the other survivor, was quite in accord with the views put forward by the above-named E. W. Distin.

Mr. Walter James Shaw, an artist and a resident of Salcombe, was watching the lifeboat when she capsized, and made an interesting sketch of the great wave, known locally as "the unlucky sea."

The consensus of opinion was that any boat would have capsized when subjected to such a heavy breaking wave, but, however that may have been, and I am not disputing that view, I may point out that the "William and Emma" was caught at a great disadvantage, as her sails had just been lowered, her oars had not yet been brought into requisition, and she would be more or less out of command at the dangerous crisis. In saying this, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not desire to impute blame to anyone. All were, no doubt, doing their duty and their best, and even if there may have been a little over-confidence in the boat, one should not forget the old adage: "De mortuis nil nisi bonum."

It appears to have been quite impossible to render any aid on the water, the Hope Cove lifeboat under the circumstances existing, was difficult to be got out, if not absolutely precluded from being launched, and Lieutenant Wilcock, R.N.R., who attempted to go out in a motor boat, was compelled to return. Mr. John William Vivian, Lloyd's Sub-Agent at Salcombe, telegraphed to Plymouth for assistance, but it was not forthcoming for some reason, and even if a tug had been sent it is quite possible that it would have arrived too late to save life.

It speaks well for Salcombe and its public spirit that, notwithstanding the great disaster which formed the subject of this Inquiry, a new lifeboat crew has already been formed in readiness for the time when they can be provided with a new craft.

In conclusion, I wish to record my deep sympathy with the relatives of those gallant men who risked, and lost, their lives in a brave attempt to render assistance to fellow creatures in peril on the sea.

At the conclusion of the evidence, Mr. Vaux, on behalf of the Board of Trade, submitted the following questions for my opinion :—

1. When and by whom was the Salcombe lifeboat, "William and Emma," built? What type of lifeboat was she?

2. When was the "William and Emma" placed at the Salcombe Station? Did she undergo harbour trials before being put into active service, and, if so, what were they and what was the result of such trials?

3. On how many occasions since she was placed at the Salcombe Station has the "William and Emma" been out to sea:

(a) on practice?

(b) on active service?

Had she proved herself to be a good sea boat in rough weather on these occasions or upon any of them?

4. What was the occasion of the services of the "William and Emma" being called for on the morning of the 27th of October last? Was she promptly launched thereafter?

5. When the "William and Emma" was launched at or about 7 a.m. of the 27th of October last:

(a) was she in good condition?

(b) did she carry all her proper equipment?

(c) had she her full and proper complement of crew; were they all supplied with and were they all wearing life-jackets?

(d) was the coxswain in command of her an experienced man in lifeboat work?

6. What was the cause of the loss of the "William and Emma" and thirteen of her crew between 10 and 11 a.m. of the 27th of October last?

I now return the following answers to the questions of the Board of Trade :—

1. The Salcombe lifeboat, "William and Emma," was built in 1903-4 by the late Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company, Limited, Blackwall, London, was of the Liverpool type, and was non-self-righting.

2. The "William and Emma" was placed at Salcombe in May, 1904. Before being sent away from London she, on the 18th of March, 1904, underwent trials (detailed in the body of this report) for draught of water, under different conditions, and for stability, the official record being: "Trial quite satisfactory."

3. The "William and Emma" had been to sea:

(a) for inspection and practice, under the District Inspector, nineteen times, once on the 26th of November, 1907, in a moderate gale from the S.W., force 6 to 7, when there was a heavy sea on Salcombe bar, and she was reported to have behaved admirably both under sails and oars.

(b) five times on active service prior to the date of the casualty, and had proved herself to be a good sea boat in rough weather.

4. The occasion of the services of the "William and Emma" being called for on the morning of the 27th of October last was the stranding, in a sandy cove near the Mag Rocks, of the topsail schooner, "Western Lass," of Plymouth. There was some interruption of the telephone between Prawle Point and Salcombe, but as soon as the news of the stranding

was received at the latter place the lifeboat was promptly launched.

5. When the "William and Emma" was launched at or about 7 a.m. of the 27th of October last:

- (a) she was in good condition;
- (b) she carried all her proper equipment;
- (c) she had her full and proper complement of crew; they were all supplied with and were all wearing life-jackets;
- (d) the coxswain in command of her was an experienced man in lifeboat work.

6. The cause of the loss of the "William and Emma," and thirteen of her crew, between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. of the 27th of October last, was that, when returning to Salcombe after being called out for service as stated in Answer No. 4, and while changing from sails to oars preparatory to crossing the bar, it then blowing a hard S.W. gale with a high sea,

she was struck on the port quarter by a huge breaking wave which capsized her, full details of the disaster being set forth in the body of this report.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. F. CABORNE,

Commander, *E.N.R.*,

Inspector.

31st January, 1917.

The Assistant Secretary,

Marine Department,

Board of Trade,

7, Whitehall Gardens,

London, S.W.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 9th day of March, 1917.)