

Alone!

PLACES BLAME FOR DISASTER ON LAX LAWS

Inspector General Uhler As-
serts Guilt Rests Partly
with Congress.

BY ARTHUR SEARS HENNING.

Washington, D. C., July 25.—[Special.]—Investigation of the Eastland disaster will open the eyes of the American people to grave faults of the public service. Among the disclosures will be the following:

Congress has failed to provide adequate protection of passengers on lake and ocean vessels by legislation and has been niggardly in appropriating funds for satisfactory enforcement of existing laws.

Practically no steps have been taken to prohibit the operation of steamers of faulty construction, like the Eastland.

Department of commerce officials are responsible for laxity in the inspection of vessels and in the enforcement of laws providing for the safety of passengers.

The overloading of steamers is made possible by the fact that the counting of passengers by the inspectors is not obligatory under the law, and responsibility therefor, when performed, is divided among three separate jurisdictions, including two departments and three bureaus.

Lake and ocean vessel owners have evaded congress to modify nearly provisions for safety of steamers, constantly subjecting inspectors to failure to relax enforcement of the law.

Wilson to Sift Affairs?

It is probable that the inquiry will disclose a scandal of the public service which will shock the people. The tragedy and its possible disclosures reflecting on the elective and appointive servants of the people already are engaging the attention of some of the highest officials of the government and it is predicted that near or later President Wilson will go to the bottom of the affair.

The big fact that has been disclosed so far is that the United States government permitted the continued operation on the lake of a vessel known to be unsafe and even sanctioned the operation of the craft in the excursion service.

Attention has been directed for years to the proposition of equipping vessels with cheap life saving appliances, instead of seeing that the ships themselves were safe, this was the criticism made by one of the highest officials in the United States department of commerce, under which the steamboat inspection service is based.

Eastland Construction Faulty?

The chief fault of the Eastland, apparently, was one of fundamental construction, a dangerous condition that the federal government has done practically nothing to guard against. Congress has provided for practically no supervision of the construction of vessels. In his annual report, Supervising Inspector General Uhler said:

Under the rules of the board of supervising inspectors, blue prints describing the hull construction of certain vessels are required to be filed with the inspectors having jurisdiction, but not at present required that these prints be approved by the local inspectors with whom they are filed. The inspectors of this service are given their attention to the passenger carrying of these excursion steamers and the number of passengers per-

"CRIMINAL GREED" CAUSED TRAGEDY, WOMEN DECLARE.

"Criminal greed and official negligence" were blamed for the Eastland tragedy yesterday by the Women's Trade Union league. A resolution passed at a meeting in Schiller hall is to be sent to President Wilson, Senator La Follette, and Secretary Redfield.

The resolution reads in part:

Whereas, An appalling disaster, the direct result of criminal greed and official negligence, has befallen Chicago in the sinking of the steamer Eastland at her dock in the Chicago river, resulting in the loss of over 1,200 lives; and

Whereas, The Lake Seamen's union and the Chicago Federation of Labor have protested to the authorities at Washington against the federal inspection service which has allowed the dangerous overcrowding of excursion steamers; and

Resolved, That we, the members of the Women's Trade Union league, pledge ourselves to aid the relief of those in need; and be it further

Resolved, That we call upon the authorities of the city, state, and nation to make a full and free investigation, and to prosecute those responsible for this crime.

Victor A. Olander was a speaker at the meeting.

mitted to be carried today is relatively smaller than that permitted to be carried a few years ago. In any event, the original jurisdiction is placed by law in the hands of the local inspectors, and those are the officers who are responsible."

Uhler Blames Congress.

Mr. Uhler also places some of the blame for existing conditions upon congress.

"In a great, powerful, and rich government such as ours," he says, "certainly some arrangement should be made for giving a sufficient number of inspectors to properly perform their duties. If a disaster occurs as a result of lack of thoroughness, the responsibility will in the first instance rest upon this service, but upon congress."

"I am speaking thus plainly that the importance of this matter may be impressed upon congress, because it does not appear to be necessary to have a great disaster occur before we take steps to prevent disaster."

Carrying Capacity Raised.

The jurisdiction of the federal inspectors considerably. Last year the Eastland was not permitted to carry more than 2,000 passengers on excursions within five miles of the shore. The records show that this year the limit was raised to 2,500.

If it was the intention to navigate the Eastland within five miles of the shore, and if the Eastland carried lifeboats and rafts to accommodate 250 persons, it was permissible to allow the carriage of 2,500 passengers, provided the inspectors deemed other conditions safe.

INSPECTORS BLAMED.

"Local inspection laws and regulations of the steamboat inspection service are responsible for the Eastland disaster at Chicago, according to John Hannan, secretary to Senator Robert M. La Follette, author of the new seamen's law which becomes effective Nov. 4 next.

During the years which Senator La Follette fought for legislation that would force a material increase in life saving equipment carried by all classes of vessels, Mr. Hannan made a deep study of transportation conditions on the ocean and great lakes. He is a recognized authority.

Lax Regulations Charged.

"The Chicago tragedy is directly attributable to the looseness of our inspection laws and to the lax regulations provided by the steamboat inspection service for the control of passenger steamers," Mr. Hannan said, "especially those in the excursion business."

"Enough facts are known to warrant a condemnation of the board of supervising inspectors and the direction of a thorough inquiry of that body.

"Who Are You?" Thousands Ask at Huge Morgue as Kindred of Missing Seek Victims of Tragedy

Who are you?

Trite, commonplace, prosaic, this was the question that greeted thousands seeking admittance to the great emergency morgue in the Second Regiment armory at Curtis street and Washington boulevard yesterday—the question asked by those thousands who saw the silent dead lying tragically face upward on the floor of the big hall, the question asked those hundreds of fortunate unfortunates who found their dead and wished to take them out of the charnel house for the last long rest.

Who are you?

Crowd Shuffles Along.

All through the night the silent line outside the entrance to the armory shuffled its way along or stood in silent sorrow waiting for admittance. All through the night silent scores wound their way between the rows of dead while silent hundreds waited outside. And as fast as those at the head of the line were admitted to the hall, others joined the end several blocks away. Daylight found them still waiting in a double line extending for two blocks. Darkness came, and still there were more waiting outside than could be admitted.

For a few hours after the armory was opened Saturday night, tears were in every eye. Mothers and daughters, wives and husbands, fathers and sons collapsed beneath the strain of the great life tragedy in which they found themselves forced to play leading parts. Coroner's deputies, nurses, doctors and police officers, hardened to the ordinary tragedies of every-day life in a city of two and a half million, broke down before this one overwhelming catastrophe.

All Are Exhausted.

But as time wore on the workers at the armory seemed to become hardened to the kaleidoscope of tragedy passing before their eyes; but they were merely exhausted. There were few more tears to moisten the eyes. The fountain of emotion had run dry. So, with drawn faces and mechanical muscles, they moved about their tasks among the dead—and among the living, too, for it was no simple task to manage the thousands thronging the hall.

Likewise with those who sought missing friend and kindred. They, too, were exhausted, and with their dead found went automatically about the task of securing possession.

However, at intervals throughout the day and evening convulsive, heartbreaking sobs or hysterical cries broke the murmur of shuffling feet and subdued voices and interrupted the calls from the telephone balcony at the north end of the hall. In dumb curiosity other seekers turned and looked at the broken one and then turned away. In every case those morbidly curious who had escaped the vigilance of the police at the entrance were prevented from crowding around the hysterical man or woman. At the first cry a squad of policemen would appear, as if by magic, to protect the sufferer, who would be carried to the emergency hospital which had been fitted out in one of the armory rooms.

Coroner and Men on Job.

Coroner Peter Hoffman and his men worked indefatigably to meet the exigencies of Chicago's greatest disaster. They turned the Second Regiment armory into a morgue and cared for nearly 1,000 bodies. For several hours the embalming was done in one corner of the hall without any barrier between the workers and those who were searching for their loved ones. To meet this difficulty huge tarpaulins were brought from the fire station across the street and raised about the corner where the work was going on.

"I'm so busy trying to meet immediate needs that I haven't had time for anything else," said Coroner Hoffman during the morning when the work was heaviest. "The problem of caring for these bodies and helping these poor people find their relatives and friends is the one we should look after now. But you can be

sure that we shall have a most rigid investigation," he added emphatically.

Sleep and Food Forgotten.

Sleep was not thought of. Lunch hours did not exist. Policemen acted as waitresses, passing sandwiches, coffee, baked beans, and crackers to the coroner and his helpers.

Others, too, had no sleep and little food; nor did they have the tonic of hard work to help carry them along through the day. They were the seekers. They waited in line through the hours of darkness; they made their way through the entrance into the hall of death; they passed between the silent lines; and then, sick at heart, they sat down along the wall and waited, waited for someone to recover body to be brought in disguised and dripping with water.

Rapid Work at Noon.

When the work of removing the bodies really began there were more than 500 corpses in the hall. In the three hours between 10:45 in the morning and 1:45 in the afternoon nearly 400 bodies were removed. Meanwhile more than twenty-five bodies had been brought in, and of the total of 100 then in the morgue about 120 remained unidentified. By 6 o'clock the number of bodies in the hall had dropped to less than fifty.

In order to preserve the bodies those unclaimed at midnight were transferred to the refrigerating plant of the Booth Cold Storage company. Photographs were taken of the bodies still in the armory late in the afternoon; and hereafter those seeking to identify unclaimed dead will be shown the photograph and clothing first, and then, if they are reasonably certain, they will be shown the body.

All work in and around the armory was remarkably well systematized. Crowds of people were kept back a block in every direction from the entrance, and patrolmen and mounted officers guarded the barricades to prevent the onlookers from breaking through and crowding about the doors. Even persons living within the lines drawn by the police excepted, but the fact that he or she had waited in line for a long time to reach the entrance was accepted as fairly adequate evidence of sincerity. Even then, in the opinion of First Deputy Supt. Herman Schuetler, who was in charge of the police, only one-fourth of those in the armory were relatives of victims.

Despite the efforts of the police the armory gradually became so crowded that at 4 o'clock Coroner Hoffman called on those not relatives and friends of the dead or missing to leave.

Orders Curious to Leave.

"Our work is being hindered by some of you curious people," the coroner announced through a megaphone. "All those not relatives or friends of the dead will have to leave."

There were many who heeded the coroner's warning and left the building; but others remained and police and deputy sheriffs made their way through the crowd ordering out those who were obviously just onlookers.

Western Electric employees were everywhere throughout the big building. Members of the employees' relief association were on hand to assist in the work of identification and in caring for the dead. On the platform at the north end of the hall a dozen free telephones were installed and these were quickly supplemented by twenty others for outgoing calls only. Local and long distance calls alike were handled free of charge over these wires.

Information Quickly Spread.

As fast as the dead were identified or any information of any value was secured the matter was telephoned to the company's information bureau and also

graphed at the same time to different offices outside Chicago where inquiries had been received from anxious friends or relatives.

Questions which could not be answered by those on the telephone platform were referred to the temporary office of the coroner on the floor below, which was connected by newly installed telephones. In all forty-five new telephones were placed in the building between the time the structure was selected for a temporary morgue and yesterday noon.

In addition announcements on the platform and on the floor called for those who were wanted by relatives and friends either on the telephone or in different parts of the building.

400 Polish Victims.

Among the workers were the members of the Polish Social Workers' club, under the direction of Miss Emily Napierowski, who attended the women's peace conference at The Hague. According to Miss Napierowski more than 400 Polish people lost their lives.

Eugene Beifeld, manager of the College Inn, who was selected by Mr. Hoffman as a member of the coroner's jury to inquire into the cause of the disaster, was sworn in at the armory yesterday. Mr. Beifeld was prevented by the police from joining the other jurors when they viewed the bodies Saturday. He had no credentials and was unable to pass the lines.

150 Women Require Doctors.

More than 150 women fainted or became hysterical and required medical attendance during the day. On the occasions when a woman became hysterical or fainted the lines would be blocked for several minutes and much confusion would be caused.

According to the nurses in attendance at the emergency hospital only two of the 150 women brought to them were there to look for relatives. The other 148 confessed they came out of morbid curiosity.

One-fourth Were Kindred.

At the entrance another check was maintained. Of course it was impossible absolutely to identify each one who sought admittance, but the fact that he or she had waited in line for a long time to reach the entrance was accepted as fairly adequate evidence of sincerity. Even then, in the opinion of First Deputy Supt. Herman Schuetler, who was in charge of the police, only one-fourth of those in the armory were relatives of victims.

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Safety Sacrificed to Gain Speed.

The Eastland was built in 1902-3. Specifications called for speed and fundamentals of naval architecture were departed from to attain this object.

On its trial trips in 1903 radical defects were discovered in the ship and experts were called in to remedy these faults.

One of the first changes made was to cut off its upper deck to increase the boat's stability. This was done on the order of Capt. Ira Manfield, federal inspector at Chicago in 1903.

Strict orders were issued at the time as to its operation, owing to the defective construction of its hull and the absence of a keel, which should have been at least forty inches. Only with its water ballast compartments properly flooded was it considered safe.

Merwin Thompson of Cleveland, captain of the Eastland from 1911 to 1913, says it was necessary to watch her ballast below the water line very closely.

W. J. Wood, Chicago, naval architect, who was employed by the original owners of the boat to correct its faulty construction, says:

"The fault of the Eastland was in the hull. After the boat was built \$35,000 was spent to correct faults, but the vulnerable faults were in the hull and these were not remedied."

Capt. Claud Evans of Cleveland, another former commander of the Eastland, says: "I believe the accident was caused by the water ballast being removed so the Eastland could dock in shallow water."

Harry Pedersen, captain of the Eastland when she toppled over Saturday, admits that the water ballast was not adjusted and owing to a failure of a valve to work it was impossible to keep the boat upright after she began to list.

J. M. Erickson, chief engineer of the Eastland, and John V. Elbert, the ship's gauger, were attempting to fill the water ballast compartment when the accident took place.

Coffee and sandwiches were served yesterday to divers and others of the rescue party on the Eastland by Miss Harriet Vittum, a Northwestern settlement worker. She was assisted by six of her friends. Miss Vittum carried the sandwiches donated by downtown hotels and restaurants to the Clark street bridge.

NEW YORK EXPERT HINTS BLAME FALLS ON CAPTAIN.

Irving Cox Says It Appears That Water Ballast Was Not Properly Distributed.

New York, July 25.—[Special.]—Irving Cox, the naval architect, said today it will be easy to fix the blame for the Eastland disaster.

"It is a frightful accident," said Mr. Cox, "but in these days the cause of such a catastrophe can be accurately determined and the blame settled beyond a doubt. From the accounts it looks to me as if the Eastland was a boat which, in order to carry a full load of passengers, had to have its water ballast tanks filled."

"It also appears that these tanks were only partly full on account of the depth of water in the Chicago river. Suppose a vessel has three water ballast tanks of 500 tons capacity each. Some captains believe that if each tank is two-thirds full it will do as well as if they filled two and left the third empty. It is far from being the case."

"Evidently the Eastland was a boat that had to have artificial ballast. Lots of vessels will list decidedly, but when they have tilted to the angle of danger, they will not tilt further. The causes of the accident look to be overwhelming, with perhaps instability due to partly filled water ballast tanks and low, open ports, through which water may have rushed in."

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