EXPLOSIONS IN DIESEL ENGINED VESSELS

Notice to Shipowners, Shipbuilders and Chief Engineers

The court of formal investigation which inquired into the explosion on the m.v. *Capetown Castle* on 17th October 1960 found that the explosion, which led to serious loss of life, may have occurred owing to an accumulation of oil in the air starting system of the port engine. An initial explosion led to flame acceleration which caused film detonations involving compressor oil in the main air pipe lines.

It had apparently been the practice on this vessel to clear choked drains on starting air pipe lines by means of a portable oil pressure pump, using lubricating oil as the pressure medium. The court pointed out that this practice could result in oil being forced into the air pipe lines.

It is therefore recommended that:

(a) Oil force pumps should not be used to clear drains on starting air pipe lines.

(b) Oil from any source should, as far as practicable and reasonable, be excluded from air pipe lines. In particular, air compressor discharge lines should be provided with means for effective interception and draining of oil and water. If necessary, filters or separators should be fitted for this purpose and drains of adequate size and number should be fitted to air pipes, receivers and other fittings to avoid any accumulation of oil at low points in the system.

(c) Periodic inspections should, where practicable, include examination of air pipe lines to ensure that measures taken are effective.

Board of Trade (MS. 7/8/045)
London, S.E.1.

February, 1963
Reprinted November, 1965