

Radio Checkmates Death

Equipment of the Tahiti Averts Disaster

issued regulations along the lines suggested by the conference. Other nations followed Britain's example, though their codes of rules were generally less stringent.

Last year another International Conference was held in London, and a second convention signed. As it will not come into force until July, 1931, there is no international set of rules in operation at present, nor will there be for nearly a year.

A Popular Broadcaster

Mr. Harrison at 1YA

MR. REX HARRISON, baritone, who has sung from 2YA, 3YA, and 4YA, will be heard from 1YA on Friday, September 5, Sunday, 7th, and Friday, 12th. In his recital on the Sunday evening he will present seven songs. Mr. Harrison is one of the finest artists who have broadcast in New Zealand.

Marconi's Yacht Takes Fire

QUITE recently a fire broke out on Marconi's yacht, the "Electra," while at anchor off a Mediterranean seaport. The outbreak was due to a short circuit which occurred while he was transmitting a message to London. Marconi superintended the fire operations and saved the yacht and much valuable apparatus, though the wireless equipment was destroyed.

WHO would have imagined when the ill-fated Tahiti sailed from Wellington Harbour only a few days ago that were it not for her radio equipment her passengers and crew were doomed? "Were it not"—that is an important concession, for radio has proved itself beyond doubt the greatest single factor employed to ensure the safety of the travelling public.

Soon after the mishap which rendered the vessel helpless and her passengers and crew in danger, the fact was known throughout a radius of thousands of miles. Within the space of a few hours the Penybryn was speeding to the scene of the threatened disaster. Hour by hour, as the water was steadily rising in the hold, the key of the operator was telling the world. Messages assuring the passengers of their ultimate safety received by the damaged ship must have kept high the spirits of all on board.

Through radio, too, the news of the disaster was spread to all those who had receivers, for the broadcasting stations sent out the news as soon as it was known. Throughout the country there were anxious relatives and friends to whom radio was a great assurance and comfort. Our announcers kept listeners posted with what was happening on the Tahiti when she was thousands of miles away. The anxious groups round receivers scattered throughout both New Zealand and Australia no doubt welcomed the news on Sunday night that the relief had been secured, and those who were on board were being transferred, and later that they were safe.

Radio as a Life-Saver.

NAUTICAL history tells of many cases in which ships have suffered mishaps similar to that occurring to the Tahiti. In earlier days, however, vessels drifted in deadly isolation, sometimes for months,

while in some cases vessels have left port and have never been heard of again.

Such an instance occurred in 1919, when the Waratah, voyaging from Adelaide to London, left Durban for Cape Town, and thereafter vanished completely. A few years before this, the Port Stephen, bound for Newcastle from Dunedin, lost her propeller and drifted to the southward for nearly a month, eventually being abandoned near Auckland Island. Provisions of coal and food had both been exhausted, and her stern gland leaked badly. The Ravenscourt took off the crew, landing them in October, 1916.

When the Waikato's propeller shaft broke off the coast of South Africa in 1899 she drifted for more than three months across the Indian Ocean. The vessel was 180 miles south of Cape Agulhas, near Cape Town, on June 5, 1899, when the shaft snapped. For three months and ten days the vessel drifted hopelessly. Wind and tide swept the derelict across 4500 miles of ocean. Four or five sailing ships were the only signs of mankind that those on board saw, and at last one of them, the Tecorora, picked them up. The Waikato had drifted in an easterly direction, and when the Tecorora attempted to tow her northward she found the vessel too heavy. Leaving the Waikato, the sailing ship went on to Mauritius, and reported the plight of the liner. A man-o'-war was sent in search, and day after day, week after week, she ploughed her way through the sea looking for the unfortunate craft. But her lookouts scanned the horizon in vain. Fortunately the s.s. Aslon picked the

Waikato up and towed her 2500 miles to Fremantle, which was reached on October 9, four months and four days after the accident.

If there had been no wireless the Tahiti might have been lost with all hands, have been listed as missing, and eventually become another "mystery of the sea." The tale of the lost Waratah might not have had a tragic ending had she been fitted out with wireless, and, after all, is it not likely that she lost her propeller?

International Regulations.

THOUGH Britain, as a seafaring nation, grasped the great maritime importance of wireless immediately upon its invention, no international regulations regarding the equipment of ships with wireless are yet in operation.

The first striking proof of the value of Marconi's invention was in 1909, when the Republic and the Florida collided in a thick fog. Though the Republic was sinking in darkness, and the wireless cabin was splintered, the apparatus was workable. The great tradition by which a ship's wireless operator remains in his cabin till the end was founded by her operator, Jack Binns, whose calls were heard, and both passengers and crew saved. After that came the Titanic disaster, from which nobody would have been saved but for the wireless.

An international conference met in London during the following year to consider various aspects affecting the Safety of Life at Sea. Here an international convention was signed, but before it could be ratified, the Great War was launched upon the world. Immediately the conflict was over the British Government

The ill-fated Tahiti steaming out of Wellington harbour on what will apparently be her last voyage. To the casual observer the wireless aerial would probably prove the most unpretentious part of the ship, yet upon these slender wires hung the fate of nearly three hundred lives.

