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NAM/JAEC/JW/NLD/ANM



JEM/DMH

14th June 1960.

Dear Mr. Alderson,

The New Shipbuilding Regulations

I promised to write to you about these Regulations during the week; as I mentioned on the telephone I have been somewhat tied recently, and we have just had the Whitsuntide interruption.

I think the revised circular for the Areas deals with the situation very well at the present stage. The new Regulations introduce many changes and, short of an exhaustive review of detail, I have no doubt that the best way of bringing the new provisions to the notice of those concerned is, as you have done, to refer to the various Parts of the Regulations, highlighting important sections.

In my view the new statutory draft is a very reasonable attempt to get away from the existing difficulties under the old Regulations, particularly as regards division of responsibilities, and a great deal is done towards providing a comprehensive body of legislation, containing something from Factories, something from Building and so on, which will bring Shipbuilding into line with the general body of regulations affecting constructional trades.

The most interesting aspect of the Regulations, and an important one, is the way responsibilities are spread so as primarily to concern the people responsible for particular operations or parts of premises. A basic liability rests on direct employers but, where appropriate, it will be up to them to see that those having general control of yards, and others, are complying with Regulations so far as it is their responsibility. Increased duties are specifically imposed on workpeople, thus in a way providing for the common occurrence of employees' carelessness or contributory negligence.

I think the general safety provisions, as regards ladders, scaffolds, staging, guard rails and the like, will cause trouble in practice where it may be hard to decide who in fact is responsible for any breach committed in cases where a number of firms are busy at the same time, but the Regulations do attempt to place liability where the

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true fault lies, and I am sure all you can do at the moment is to stress the importance of your workpeople not interfering themselves with staging, but to make arrangements with the staging owners. Work on staging is such a common source of accidents. We may find head contractors' and owners' terms of indemnity altered when the Regulations come into force.

One point which we have recently touched on in another connection, it is interesting to see the responsibility for provision of first aid arrangements (Regulation 79) placed fair and square on shipyard management. This is giving statutory effect to what we decided must be the position under other bodies of regulations, and the general law, where the requirements on this matter are not clear. It very much confirms the view we have recently taken as regards your larger contract sites.

Beyond this, at the present stage, I have nothing to add and I think you can very usefully send the circular out as advance notice in Areas. Some helpful comment may be forthcoming. I will let you know when we hear anything about the Regulations being brought into effect; so far they are still a statutory draft.

Yours faithfully,

Assistant Secretary.

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