

THOUSANDS SE

WHOLE VILLAGE AS MOURNERS

Last Farewell of Wives and Mothers

'DUTY NOBLY DONE'

Bodies of Brave Men at Rest in One Grave

One of the most impressive funeral services ever held took place yesterday at Rye (Sussex) when the bodies of fifteen of the eventeen lifeboat heroes were buried in the huge grave.

Thousands of people saw the affecting last scenes in Rye Harbour Churchyard, near the sea on which the men lived and died. One hundred and twenty pall-bearers—lifeboatmen and members of the British Legion—took it in turns to carry the fifteen coffins to the church.

In the House of Commons yesterday it was stated that the Board of Trade had decided to hold an inquiry into the disaster.

SIMPLE BURIAL

Scenes of Grief in Harbour Village of Mourning—Fatherless Children

From Our Special Correspondent

Rye (Sussex), Tuesday.

Near the sea they loved so well and on which they lived and died, the bodies of fifteen of the heroic Rye lifeboatmen were laid to rest.

Few ceremonies could be simpler and none more impressive than that which accompanied their burial in the little cemetery of the weather-beaten village church, after wives and mothers had tended the coffins of their lost ones in the Sailors' Institute.

To no Prince or Emperor has more sincere homage been paid than that to-day to the memory of these simple hardworking fisherfolk who died on an errand of mercy to save others.

FLAG-DRAPED COFFINS

"Greater love hath no man than this" was the inscription on one of the hundreds of wreaths, and this epitomised the spirit of quiet pride which predominated.

When the lifeboat crew rushed their boat out to sea on that fateful morning they knew how slender their chances were of returning safely to land, and yet they cheerfully embarked on the trip because others were in need of help.

That was why, as the long procession of mourners followed the fifteen flower-laden and flag-draped coffins to the grave to-day there were few who gave way to the grief which gripped their hearts.

A mother who mourned a loved one, a sweet-heart who had lost her boy, and now and again a child rendered fatherless, were all who wept.

Among the hundreds of mourners, for practically the entire village followed the coffins, were fathers, sons and brothers who lived on the sea and by the sea, and might one day die in the sea.

Lifeboatmen from Hastings, wearing their picturesque red woollen caps, were there to pay tribute to the men who had often worked with them. Together with members of the British Legion they composed the 120 pall-bearers.

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"TOLL FOR THE BRAVE"

Pathetic Inscriptions on Wreaths—Tribute of Latvian Minister

Inscriptions on the wreaths were pathetic in their simplicity, many of them merely bearing the names Ernie, Harry and Robert.

"To our boys. Their duty nobly done," read one, and "Toll for the brave, the brave that are no more," another.

The Latvian Minister, M. Fridricks Vesmans, who attended the funeral, sent a laurel wreath bound with the Latvian colours, an appropriate and touching tribute as it was in an effort to save the crew of a Latvian ship that the men were drowned.

Black stormclouds gathered overhead as the procession wound along the windswept marshes to the tiny church to the strains of "Lead kindly light," but the rain held off long enough for the coffins to be gently lowered into the one huge grave profusely scattered with laurel leaves and chrysanthemums.

At the grave-side people thought of the two men who were not laid to rest beside their comrades—Harry Cutting and young Jack Head—whose bodies are still in the sea.

(Continued on page 2)

INQUIRY TO BE HELD

Minister Says Allegations Regarding Lifebelts Will Be Investigated

(Continued from page 2)

Mr. Herbert Williams (Parliamentary Secretary Board of Trade) stated in the Commons yesterday that the Board had decided to hold an inquiry into the Rye lifeboat disaster and that the inquiry would cover the allegations made with regard to the lifebelts.

Miss Wilkinson: Doesn't he think the time has arrived to take away the whole of this important service from private charity and make it into a State service? (Cries of "No.")

Mr. Williams: The disaster has nothing to do with the form of ownership of the lifeboats. It had relation more particularly to the depth of the sea at this particular place.

Mr. Mackinder: Does he really think that if it had been a national service they would have had a non-self-righting boat?

Commander Kenworthy asked if Mr. Williams was not aware that the crew could be drowned even if it was a non-capsizable boat.

In the Commons to-morrow Mr. W. Thorne will ask whether the Government is represented on the governing body of the R.N.L.I., and if any action is to be taken to have the non-righting type of lifeboat abolished.