

it was necessary for Captain Williams to take out insurance cover for normal ship work in addition to war-risk insurance, and the condition of the "Claymore" can be judged when it is known that the cover in each case amounted to no more than £2,000, although in the first instance it had been decided to insure her for £1,000.

On 14th December, 1940, Captain Williams advised the Marine Department that the "Claymore" was on the job and sweeps were about to be put over. Prior to this, however, a good deal of work had been put in on the job of strengthening and furnishing the "Claymore." Furnishing such as bedding, cutlery, and other small items were hired by the Navy Department to "Claymore" at the request of the Marine Department.

Arrangements had also been made for minesweepers to mark off part of the area to enable the "Claymore" to carry out her sweeping operations with some degree of safety from mines. In spite of these precautions, however, it was later found that the "Claymore" had on numerous occasions passed over enemy-sown mines many times, it being only her light draught which saved her from the same fate as that which met the "Niagara."

On 12th February the Marine Department was advised that the wreck had been located and that it had a heavy list, being buried to within 10 ft. of the main deck in the mud. From then on Captain Williams advised the Department of his progress, and in spite of very bad weather which limited the capabilities of the salvage party to one working-day per week, very satisfactory progress was made.

On 11th August a letter was received by the Secretary of the Marine Department from a firm of solicitors in Auckland requesting details on behalf of the proposed salvage syndicate, the writer stating that he was informed that Captain Williams' project was doomed to failure. The Secretary of the Marine Department advised the inquirer that the party in possession of the "Niagara" were the accredited agents of the owners of the bullion and therefore the only ones allowed to operate.

At last, on 25th October, Captain Williams wrote to the Department and advised it that he had delivered to the bank £150,000 worth of bullion, this bullion being salvaged by grabs, the largest of which measured 3 ft., through an opening 4 ft. by 8 ft., it having been necessary to blow away three decks before this opening could be made.

A rather disturbing cable arrived at this time stating that an Australian newspaper correspondent in London had telegraphed a comprehensive story to Australia covering the whole of the salvage operations. This story, although passed by the London censor, was stopped by the Australian authorities and all possible precautions were taken to prevent leakage of the story overseas or its publication in New Zealand.

Shortly after this, fears for the safety of the operations through the publication of the story in London were allayed by advice from the Admiralty that the story had not been published in any English papers and that a stop against publication had been issued by the Censorship authorities.

On 27th October the Minister of Marine received a letter from a person in Australia who was interested in some way in a new diving-dress requesting advice as to whether or not the salvage party had reached the gold, but, of course, the information requested was not given.

By 16th November approximately 60 per cent. of the total bullion had been delivered to the bank, and on 7th December, 1941, the last bar, twisted and torn by the grabs, was hauled on board the "Claymore," this last bar bringing the total recovered to £2,397,000.

The salvage operations being over, Captain Williams wasted no time in returning the vessel to the Government after removing from it the heavy salvage gear imported from Australia.

Among this gear was the specially designed diving-bell from which Diver J. Johnston and his brother directed operations. This bell was necessary, as it was impossible for a diver to descend to the depth at which the "Niagara" lay in the standard rubber diving-suit. Throughout the operations danger was encountered by the divers and