

TRUCULENT: MYSTERY OF THE MISSING HOUR

A small signal flag perched on a marker buoy serves as the grim and lasting reminder of a disaster that shocked the nation. As salvage men move into the Thames Estuary to raise the TRUCULENT from its watery tomb, questions about the cause of the tragedy remain unanswered. The chief question centres on a missing hour-and-a-quarter, the time lag between the actual collision and the news of it being received at the Admiralty. What happened during those minutes may never become known, for the inquiry into the mishap is being conducted in secret. Many people feel that the reasons for a disaster that cost the lives of 64 brave men should not be withheld. In justice to the rescue workers, who risked their lives in the hope of saving others, and in fairness to the officers in command of the two vessels involved, they feel that the investigation should be open to the public. This was done at the time of the THETIS disaster. That procedure it is contended should again be followed. As to hopes of salvaging the TRUCULENT, Diver Alf Russell of Gillingham answers our question whether it will be a difficult job.

"Well, with hard bottom as that is and given reasonable weather, I don't think so. She's listed but the damage is all in one compartment for'ard and I think the Navy ought to make a good job of it."