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First specialized ship for nickel ore carriage delivered

On October 23rd, 2012, the world's first specialized vessel of carriage of nickel ore - The Jules Garnier II was delivered by Japan's Naikai Zosen Corporation, according to ClassNK. The Jules Garnier II is the first vessel to be recognized as a "Specially Constructed Cargo Ship" for carriage of Nickel Ore in accordance with the IMO's IMSBC Code, and ClassNK's Classification Committee has announced vessel's registration during their monthly meeting on October 22nd.

It is well known that carrying nickel ore would drastically impair the ship's stability and safety as it is likely to liquefy during transport, and these cargoes have been cited as the cause of four vessel casualties and the loss of 66 seafarers in 2010-2011. Nickel ore has been named by INTERCARGO as "the world's most dangerous cargo" and IMO is underway to strengthen the relevant regulations in IMSBC Code.

As far as concerned, the IMSBC Code requires that the cargo's moisture content (MC) which may liquefy has to be tested prior to commencement of loading and also forbids some non-specialized vessels from loading the cargoes with higher greater MC than the specified Transportable Moisture Limit (TML). Nonetheless, it is unavoidable to raise the questions regarding the validity of the test results for Nickel Ore and whether these cargoes could be carried by standard vessels. Through ClassNK's independent research, their world's first hull structure and stability requirements for building "Specially Constructed Cargo Vessels" have been finally achieved in 2011 which have also been achieved by the government of Panama and Japan for use in vessels flagged with their administrations. Besides, they have further earned the recognition of INTERCARGO as well as the wider maritime industry, and ClassNK was presented with the "Safety Award" contribution to the safe contribution of Nickel Ore.

The Jules Garnier II with 27,200 dwt is the first vessel in the world to apply ClassNK's new requirements in its construction and makes use longitudinal bulkheads in its cargo holds to ensure stability and structural strength even when liquefied nickel ore cargoes are loaded. The ship's design earned the approval of the Panamanian government in September 2012, and with its completion in September 2012, is the first and currently only vessel to be certified as safe to carry liquefied Nickel Ore in line with the IMSBC Code. The vessel is also the first to earn ClassNK's new SCCS notation for safe carriage of nickel ore in recognition of its special construction.

ClassNK has indicated that they will be continuing our research on nickel ore and other cargoes that can liquefy during transport, and they hope that they can develop methods for existing vessels to safely transport these dangerous cargoes.

Source of Information: Andrew Liu & Co., Ltd

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Andrew Liu & Co., Ltd
Hong Kong - Shanghai - Fuzhou - Dalian
Tel: +86 21 6039 9288 Email: marketing@andrewliu.com.hk
<http://www.andrewliu.com.hk>