

(No. 2778.)

“AMADIS” (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

IN the matter of a formal Investigation held at the Guild Hall, in the Borough of King's Lynn, on the 31st day of December 1885 and 1st day of January 1886, before JOHN OSBORNE SMETHAM and WILLIAM THOMPSON, Esquires, two of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said Borough, assisted by Captains PARISH and KENNEDY, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the steamship “AMADIS,” on Hogland Island, at 3.30 a.m. of the 11th September 1885.

Report of Court.

The Court, having carefully inquired into the circumstances attending the above-mentioned shipping casualty, finds, for the reasons stated in the annex hereto, that the “Amadis” was stranded through negligent navigation, in continuing to run on without due precautions when the weather was thick and the distance had been nearly run without sighting the Red Light of Hogland. The Court does not deal with the master's certificate, but severely cautions him to be more careful in future. The Court suspends the second mate's (James McCracken) certificate for three calendar months.

Dated this 1st day of January 1886.

(Signed) JOHN O. SMETHAM, }
WILLIAM THOMPSON, } Justices.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) ALFRED PARISH, }
H. C. KENNEDY, } Assessors.

Annex to the Report.

The “Amadis,” official number 70,229, is an iron screw steamer, built at Stockton in 1875. Her gross tonnage is 1,157·86, and net tonnage 730·33 tons. Her length is 230, breadth 30, and depth 17·0. She has 2 compound direct acting surface engines of 99 h.p. combined. She is schooner-rigged, and at the time of her stranding was the property of the Durham Steamship Company and others, Richard Joseph Kay being the managing owner. She left Cronstadt on the 10th September at 4 p.m., bound to Sutton Bridge, with a cargo of 364 standards of deals, of which 40 to 44 standards were on deck; drawing 17 ft. aft, and 15 ft. 6 in. forward. She was under the command of Lewis Anderson, holding a certificate of competency, No. 05,015, and had a crew of 19 hands all told, namely, master, 2 mates, steward, cook, 5 A.B.'s, boatswain, and lamptrimmer, 2 engineers, 1 donkeyman, 4 firemen and engineer's steward. She had also 1 passenger, who was the captain's wife. Weather on leaving was thick, with moderate breeze from the eastward. She had three compasses, which had been adjusted at Newcastle in February 1884, viz., 1 pole, 1 bridge steering compass, and 1 aft, and was fitted with 4 pumps on deck, worked by hand, beside the usual engine room pumps. At 1.5 a.m. on the 11th of September, the weather being then clear, the light on Sommers Island was abeam, bearing N.N.W. at a distance of three miles as verified by the 4-point bearing. The master then went to lie down in the chart room, setting the course S.W. by W. $\frac{1}{4}$ W. by the pole compass, which was about 2° more to the westward, magnetic, and leaving orders with the second mate, who was then in charge of the deck, to call him if the weather became thick, or when the red light on the south point of Hogland was sighted, and to attend also to the standing orders, a copy of which was handed into Court, and which directed that no alteration was to be made in the course or speed of the ship unless under emergencies, and that the master was to be called at any time if circumstances made it necessary. The vessel was going at full speed, about 8½ knots, and the distance from the vessel's then position to off Hogland was about 22 miles or about 2½ hours

L 367. 2556. 180.—1/86. Wt. 408. E. & S.

run only. No orders were given, however, to the second mate to call the master if the light was not seen at the time expected, or when a distance had been run bringing the vessel within the range of the red light, nor were any orders given with regard to the north light of Hogland. There was on watch besides the second mate 2 A.B.'s, namely, one at the wheel, and one on the look-out, but the master stated that the boatswain and 1 A.B., who were kept at work during the day, were reserve hands to be called in case of requiring to heave the lead or other necessity. The weather remained clear until about 2.15, when it became hazy, and appears to have gradually thickened.

The lights of several steamers were seen steering in opposite directions and all passing to the southward of the “Amadis.” About 3 a.m., or shortly after, a bright light was reported on the starboard bow, according to the helmsman about 3 points on the bow, and which he told the Court he knew at once to be a light on the shore. It remained in sight about 5 or 10 minutes. At 3.15 the weather then became very thick, and the second mate seeing what he thought a white fog ahead, telegraphed to stand by, and at 3.20 to go easy, and immediately afterwards the look-out man on the fore-castle reported land ahead, and the second mate seeing something like a black bank ahead, went down and called the captain, who came on deck immediately and saw breakers ahead. The captain on coming up telegraphed to engine room to stop and reverse. Before the engines had made more than two revolutions astern, the vessel struck heavily, at about 3.30, on the mainland of the island of Hogland, about 1½ mile to northward and eastward of the red light which had not been seen. On sounding round 6 to 7 fathoms water were found under the stern and 11 feet under the bows, the vessel having run up an incline of rock. She was found to be holed in the fore-ballast tank. The pumps were set on and no water came into the ship excepting in the forehold. The deck cargo was jettisoned and a kedge anchor laid out astern with a steel hawser and taken to a winch to assist engines which were worked full-speed astern, but without effect, the vessel remaining fast. On the morning of the 12th September, a salvage tug came and towed the “Amadis” off for 1,950l. She was taken to Ratha for the night, and the following day to Helsingfors, and ultimately to Stockholm, where she was repaired. It was found that 36 plates had to come out, 28 frames straightened or renewed, 9 floors were broken, 40 feet of keel missing and 12 of the stem. The expense of repairing was 2,050l. Having been repaired she proceeded on her voyage and eventually arrived at Sutton Bridge, where she now is. These being the facts of the case, at the close of the evidence the counsel for the Board of Trade submitted the following questions to the Court:—

1. What was the cause of the stranding of the vessel?
2. What number of compasses had the vessel on board, and where were they placed?
3. Did the master ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observation from time to time?
4. Were the errors of the compasses correctly ascertained, and the proper corrections to the courses applied?
5. Whether proper measures were taken at or about 1.5 a.m. of the 11th September to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel?
6. Was a safe and proper course then set and steered, and was due and proper allowance made for tide and currents?
7. Was the master on deck at a time when the safety of the vessel required his personal supervision?
8. Did the weather become thick at or after 2 a.m. of the 11th September, and if so, was the speed of the vessel promptly and sufficiently reduced, and was the second officer, under the circumstances, justified in neglecting to call the master?
9. Was the lead used, and if not, was such neglect justifiable?
10. Was a good and proper look-out kept?
11. Was the vessel navigated with proper and seamanlike care?

The Board of Trade are of opinion that the certificates of the master and of the second officer should be dealt with.

(Signed) FRANCIS R. Y. RADCLIFFE,
Counsel for the Board of Trade.

Answers by the Court.

1. The casualty was caused through negligent navigation in continuing to run on without due precautions, when the weather was very thick and the distance had been nearly run without sighting the red light on the South Point of Hogland.

2. The vessel had three compasses on board—a pole compass, 12 feet above the upper bridge, a steering compass on the lower bridge, and a steering compass aft.

3. It appears from the statement of the master that he did ascertain the deviations of his compass by observations from time to time with Ainsley's compass corrector.

4. From the deviation cards produced in Court it seems that the errors of the compasses were ascertained at Newcastle in February 1884. The proper corrections were applied to the courses.

5. Proper measures were taken at about 1.5 a.m. on the 11th September to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel.

6. The course then set would have been a safe and proper one with due allowance for tide and currents had it been duly steered and made good.

7. The master was not on deck at a time when the safety of the vessel required his personal supervision.

8. The weather became thick at and after 2 a.m. on the 11th September. The speed of the vessel was not reduced so promptly and sufficiently as it should have been. The 2nd officer was not justified in neglecting to call the master.

9. The lead was not used, such neglect was not justifiable.

10. A good and proper look-out was kept.

11. The vessel was navigated with proper and seamanlike care up to 1.5 a.m. on the 11th September, but not after that time.

The Court finds the master, Lewis Anderson, in default for not, before leaving the deck, giving specific orders to the 2nd officer to call him when the vessel had run to within the range of the red light of Hogland so that he might have then been on deck, when the casualty would in all probability have been averted, but under the circumstances of the case does not deal with his certificate, trusting that this will be a severe warning to him to exercise greater care in the future.

The Court finds the 2nd mate, James McCracken, in default. He neglected to carry out the orders given to him, to call the master when the weather got thick, and showed such a lamentable want of judgment in not taking proper precautions when the vessel was in danger, that the Court feels compelled, though with great reluctance, to suspend his certificate for 3 calendar months.

(Signed) W. SMETHAM, } Justices of
WILLIAM THOMPSON, } the Peace.

We concur.

(Signed) W. PARISH, } Nautical
H. C. KENNEDY, } Assessors.