

(No. 2765.)

“LUCRETIA” (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

In the matter of a formal Investigation held at the Town Hall, North Shields, on the 22nd day of December 1885, before JOSEPH GREEN and JOHN WAIT, Esquires, assisted by Captains CURLING and KENNEDY, into the circumstances attending the loss of the S.S. “LUCRETIA,” on the 28th of November 1885, in the North Sea.

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 cause of the vessel's listing was the shifting of the cargo by reason of the vessel having been struck by exceptionally heavy seas, causing her eventually to founder.

Dated this 23rd day of December 1885.

(Signed) JOS. GREEN, } Justices.
JOHN WAIT, }

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) WILLM. CURLING, } Assessors.
R.N.R., }
H. C. KENNEDY, }

Annex to the Report.

This is an investigation into the circumstances attending the loss of the S.S. “Lucretia,” of North Shields, on the 28th of November 1885, in the North Sea, held at the Town Hall, North Shields, before Joseph Green and John Wait, Esquires, two of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace, assisted by Captains Curling and Kennedy (Nautical Assessors). Mr. De Hamel appeared on behalf of the Board of Trade, Mr. W. Otley Foster for the master, and Mr. H. A. Adamson represented the owners. The “Lucretia,” official number 79,205, was an iron screw steamer, built at Sunderland by Messrs. Bartram and Haswell in 1878, of the following dimensions: Length, 260'5; breadth, 33'5; and depth, 21'8; of 1515'14 gross and 986'53 registered tonnage. She was fitted with two compound surface condensing engines of 150 horse power (combined), and was owned by Mr. C. Turnbull, of North Shields, and several others, Mr. Turnbull being appointed managing owner on the 6th of September 1878. From the evidence adduced, it appears that the “Lucretia” left Gothenburg on the 25th of November 1885, after having loaded a cargo of 1,700 tons of old rails, with a crew of 22 hands all told, under the command of George Grigs, who holds a certificate of competency, No. 26,439, bound to Civita de Vecchia, via the Tyne, where she intended to call for more bunker coals, the vessel drawing 18 feet 1 inch forward, and 19 feet 1 inch aft. The “Lucretia” rounded the Scaw between 2 and 3 a.m. of the 26th of November going full speed with fresh breeze. At daybreak of the 26th the wind came away very strong from the E., and the sea came away during the night, and seas broke over the vessel. At 9 p.m. the seas commenced to poop her, and she was put head to sea, engines going dead slow. The wind increased to a hurricane, and the engines were put full speed ahead, but the vessel fell off several times. On the morning of the 26th of November between 9 and 10 o'clock a very heavy sea struck her on the starboard bow, and the cargo in No. 4 hold shifted over to port, giving the vessel a heavy list. Early on the morning of the 27th the wind and sea caught her on the port bow, shifting the cargo in Nos. 2 and 4 holds, throwing her over to starboard, giving a very heavy list with the lee

rail in the water. The vessel became unmanageable, and the engineer reported the water increasing on the pumps. The lifeboats were stove and washed overboard when she took the list to starboard. Signals of distress were made to a Dutch fishing smack called the “North Star,” which had hove in sight on the morning of the 28th November. About 9.15 a.m. the smack's boat took the crew off, the sea having then moderated, but the condition of the vessel rendering it too dangerous to remain by her. The engines were stopped before leaving, but at that time the lee fires were already drowned out. The vessel was still making water fast with five feet of water in the engine room. The smack stood by all day, and at 7 p.m. the “Lucretia” foundered without any effects whatever being saved. The “Lucretia” on this occasion had about 400 tons less cargo than she has carried, and her disc was fully 12 inches out of the water. The Court had no evidence before it to enable it to come to any other conclusion than that this vessel had fallen in with exceptionally heavy weather, and that in spite of the cargo having been carefully stowed by an experienced stevedore, supervised by the master and carpenter, it nevertheless shifted, these two circumstances thus combining to bring about the casualty notwithstanding the master bringing to his aid all his experience to the best of his ability.

At the conclusion of the evidence the following questions were submitted to the Court:—

1. Was the “Lucretia” in good and seaworthy condition on leaving Gothenburg?
2. Were the hatchways and all other deck openings properly protected and secured?
3. Was the cargo properly stowed, and were the shores sufficient in strength and number and properly placed and secured in order to prevent the cargo from shifting?
4. What was the cause of the vessel listing to port and subsequently to starboard?
5. What was the cause of the vessel making water?
6. Was every possible effort made to keep the water under and to save the vessel?
7. Was she navigated with proper and seamanlike care?
8. Whether the master and officers are, or either of them is, in default?

Dated this 22nd December 1885.

LANCEL DE HAMEL,
For the Board of Trade.

Judgment.

1. The “Lucretia” was in good and seaworthy condition on leaving Gothenburg.
2. From the evidence before the Court the hatchways and all other deck openings were properly protected and secured.
3. The cargo was, in the opinion of the Court, properly stowed and shored in an efficient manner by an experienced stevedore under the supervision of the master and the ship's carpenter; the shores were sufficient in strength and number and were properly placed and secured to prevent the cargo from shifting.
4. The cause of the vessel's listing was the shifting of the cargo by reason of the vessel having been struck by exceptionally heavy seas.
5. There was no evidence before the Court to shew the cause of the vessel making water; the Court are, however, of opinion that it arose from her meeting with an unusually heavy gale causing the cargo to shift and thereby straining the vessel and causing her to make water somewhere in her hull below the water line.
6. Yes.
7. Yes.
8. No.

(Signed) JOS. GREEN, } Justices.
JOHN WAIT, }

We concur.

(Signed) WILLM. CURLING, } Assessors.
R.N.R., }
H. C. KENNEDY, }