

(No. 2436.)

“REDESDALE” (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 and 23rd days of January 1885, before JOHN HEDLEY and JOHN ROBSON, Esquires, assisted by Captains WILSON and FRENCH into the circumstances attending the loss of the S.S. “REDESDALE,” through striking the Pearl Rock, Gibraltar Bay, on the 22nd day of December 1884.

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 stranding of the S.S. “Redesdale” was from the neglect of the master in not paying attention to the clearing marks on shore, and in not checking the course of the vessel by those marks, and the Court finds the master in default, and suspends his certificate, No. 23,735, for six calendar months, from the date hereof.

Dated this 23rd day of January 1885.

(Signed) JOHN HEDLEY, } Justices.
JOHN ROBSON, }

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) R. WILSON, } Assessors.
A. P. FRENCH, }

Annex to the Report.

This is an investigation into the circumstances attending the loss of the S.S. “Redesdale,” of North Shields, through striking the Pearl Rock in the Straits of Gibraltar, held at the Town Hall, North Shields, before John Hedley and John Robson, Esquires, two of Her Majesty’s Justices of the Peace, assisted by Captains Wilson and French (nautical assessors). Mr. E. B. Gee appeared on behalf of the Board of Trade, Mr. Drummond represented the owners, and the master appeared in person. The “Redesdale,” official number 65,432, was an iron screw steamer, built at Southwick, in the county of Durham, in 1872, by Robert Thompson, Junior, of the following dimensions, length 225.2, breadth 31.1, and depth of hold 17.3; of 1,119.15 gross, and 722.76 registered tonnage. She was schooner rigged, and was fitted with two compound surface-condensing engines of 99 horse-power (combined), and was owned by Mr. Edward Milburn, of the Royal Insurance Buildings, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and several others, Mr. Milburn being appointed managing owner on the 28th of October 1875. From the evidence adduced, it appears that the “Redesdale” left Alexandria on the 10th of December 1884, with a cargo of 1,220 tons of cotton seed, under the command of John Stratford, who holds a certificate of competency, No. 23,735, having a crew of 21 hands, all told, the vessel drawing 14 feet 11 inches forward, and 17 feet 8 inches aft, bound to Sharpness, the vessel being well found and in good condition. The “Redesdale” arrived at Gibraltar on the 22nd of December 1884, and left there about 11.15 a.m. of that day, the course set by the master being S.W. by S. magnetic, and at about noon the vessel struck the Pearl Rock on the east side, the vessel scraping all along on her starboard bilge, and at about 1.15 p.m. she foundered, the crew being saved by leaving the vessel in the two lifeboats. It is palpable that the course set by the master was never steered, or the vessel would have never struck the Pearl Rock on the 22nd of December 1884. The weather was fine and clear, sea smooth, the clearing marks on land were unmistakable and prominent, yet no notice whatever was taken of them by the way of bearings, to check the course of the vessel. The Norie’s chart used was sufficient for the purpose of keeping clear of the Pearl Rock, but the Court considered that the Admiralty charts should on all occasions be at hand. It is true that the crew were saved by the two lifeboats belonging to the ship, but this must be attributed more to the favourable circumstances of the weather and the position of the vessel, and the proximity of a Spanish

fishing boat at the time of the casualty, than to the condition of the boats, which had become leaky through want of proper attention, and the jolly boat was useless, having been stove by the sea a day or two previously. The Court found the master in default, and suspended his certificate as set forth in the judgment.

At the conclusion of the evidence the following questions were submitted to the Court on behalf of the Board of Trade:—

1. What was the cause of the stranding of the British steamship “Redesdale,” on the Pearl Rock, on the 22nd day of December 1884?
2. Whether the compasses were in good working order and properly placed? Whether the master ascertained their deviation by observation from time to time, and applied the proper corrections to the courses?
3. Whether the vessels was properly supplied with charts, and whether a larger scale of charts should not have been used?
4. Whether a safe and proper course was set and steered after leaving the Coal Hulk at Gibraltar about 11.15 a.m. of the 22nd December last, and whether due and proper allowance was made for tide and currents, and proper attention paid to clearing marks?
5. Whether any, and, if any, what alterations were made in the course of the vessel on the 22nd of December last from the time she left the Coal Hulk until she struck, and whether such alterations (if any) were safe and proper, and due allowance made for tide and currents, and proper attention paid to clearing marks?
6. Whether a good and proper look-out was kept?
7. Whether the total neglect of the lead was justifiable?
8. Whether the vessel was navigated with proper and seamanlike care?
9. Whether the boats were in good and proper condition at the time of the disaster, and if any of them were not so, who was responsible for their then condition?
10. Whether the master and officers, or any of them, are or is in default?

In the opinion of the Board of Trade the certificate of the master should be dealt with.

Judgment.

1. The cause of the stranding of the S.S. “Redesdale” was from the neglect of the master in not paying attention to the clearing marks on shore, and in not checking the course of the vessel by those marks.
2. The compasses were in good working order and properly placed, and the master stated that he ascertained their daily error.
3. The chart that was used by the master was sufficient to enable him to avoid the danger of the Pearl Rock.
- 4 and 5. It is impossible that the course steered was a correct one, as if the course, viz., S.W. by S. magnetic, stated by the master to have been set and steered, the steamer would have cleared the rock. No attention appears to have been given to the clearing marks on shore. The Court does not consider that tide or current had anything to do with the casualty.
6. The master was on the bridge, but there was no look-out forward.
7. The clearing marks are so well defined and reliable, and the weather being fine and clear, the use of the lead was not called for.
8. The vessel was not navigated with proper and seamanlike care.
9. The boats appear to have been in good order at the commencement of the voyage, but the jolly boat was stove before the ship arrived at Gibraltar; the two lifeboats became leaky during the voyage, the starboard one got damaged in being lowered after the casualty, and part of the crew had to be taken out of her by a Spanish fishing boat; the port one, which was not injured, leaked so badly that by the time she arrived at the shore she was half full of water, although the hands had been constantly bailing with a bucket.
10. The Court finds the master, John Stratford, in default, and suspends his certificate, No. 23,735, for six calendar months from the date hereof.

(Signed) JOHN HEDLEY, } Justices.
JOHN ROBSON, }

We concur in the above judgment.

(Signed) R. WILSON, } Assessors.
A. P. FRENCH, }