

(No. 1829.)

"GLENOCUM" (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

In the matter of the formal Investigation held at Liverpool, on the 11th and 12th days of June 1883, before H. C. ROTHERY, Esquire, Wreck Commissioner, assisted by Captains PARISH and WILSON, as Assessors, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the steamship "GLENOCUM," of London, near Porth Cadlan, in Cardigan Bay, on the 23rd May last, whilst on a voyage from Newport, Monmouth, to Liverpool.

Report of Court.

The Court, having carefully inquired into the circumstances of the above-mentioned shipping casualty, finds, for the reasons annexed, that the stranding of the said vessel was due to the negligent navigation thereof by John Sims, the master, in having put her from off the South Bishops on a course too much to the eastward; in not having taken a cast of the lead; and in having kept her going at full speed, although the weather had become very foggy, until just before she stranded.

For these wrongful acts and defaults the Court suspends the certificate of the said John Sims for twelve months from this date, but recommends that during the period of such suspension he be allowed a first mate's certificate.

The Court was not asked to make any order as to costs.

Dated this 12th day of June 1883.

(Signed) H. C. ROTHERY, Wreck Commissioner.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) ALFRED PARISH, } Assessors.
R. WILSON, }

Annex to the Report.

The "Glenocum" was an iron screw steamship belonging to the Port of London, of 343 tons gross and 233 tons net register, and was fitted with engines of 75 horse power. She was built at Drogheda in the year 1875, and at the time of the casualty which forms the subject of the present inquiry she was the property of Mr. William Edward Murray Tomlinson, of 3, Richmond Terrace, Whitehall, Barrister-at-Law, and member for Preston. She left Newport in Monmouthshire at about 8.30 a.m. of the 22nd of May last, bound to Liverpool, with a crew of 11 hands all told, and a cargo of 353 tons of steel crop ends, and at about 9.30 p.m. the same day had arrived off the South Bishops. The night, we are told, was fine, the wind light from the S.W., the sea perfectly smooth, and the tide, which was at the very top of the springs, was flood. She passed at a distance of about a mile and three quarters outside the Bishops, and was then, we were told, put upon a N.N.E. course for an hour, after which the course was altered to N.E. half N. It was the mate's watch that night from 7 to 11 o'clock, and on his going below at 11.20, Winter, an able seaman, but who was acting as second mate, took charge. The captain, it seems, was at this time on deck; but in about 10 to 15 minutes afterwards he went below, leaving Winter in charge, and with another able seaman at the wheel, and with directions to keep the vessel on her course, and to look out for the Cardigan Bay Light. According to Winter, the course which he was ordered to steer was N.E., not N.E. 1/2 N., and that by the wheel house compass. Not seeing the Light, Winter, at about 2 a.m., went down to the cabin and told the captain, who desired him to go back and keep a good look-out. At about 3.20 a.m. the chief officer came on deck, and, seeing that the weather had become hazy, he directed Winter to go and tell the captain. On being told that it was hazy

the master came on deck, and he then altered the course of the vessel a quarter to half a point more to the eastward, with the view, as he told us, of making Bardsey Island Light. At about 6 a.m. the weather had become very hazy, so that objects could only be seen at a very short distance off; and accordingly the master ordered the chief officer to go and get the deep sea lead, which we are told was kept in one of the after-boats; and just as he had got it, and was returning along the deck with it, the master observed something dark ahead, upon which he ordered the engines to be stopped, and then to be put full speed astern. Whether there was a delay in executing these orders is a point on which there has been some discussion; but however this may be, before the vessel's way had been stopped she took the ground, and although the engines were kept going astern for some minutes, she remained fast; and within a quarter of an hour she had filled, the water inside being as high as it was outside. Signals having been made, assistance came to them from the shore, when it was found that she had grounded on the west side of Porth Cadlan Bay, and about 4 or 5 miles to the east of Bardsey Light. Having obtained a gang of 12 men from the shore, they proceeded to lighten her, and although about one hundred tons of the steel ends were thrown overboard, it was found impossible to move her. In the meantime the captain had telegraphed to the brokers at Liverpool, and a steam tug, divers, and pumps were sent round in charge of Captain Archer. They arrived there on the 25th, when the holes in the bottom having been partially stopped, and the vessel pumped out, she was hauled off the beach, with the object of taking her to Pwllheli; but on finding that she was making a great deal of water, it was deemed advisable to lay her aground again in Aberdaron Bay. The holes having been again stopped, another attempt was made to take her to Pwllheli, but she made water so rapidly that she sank in 5 fathoms water, and we are told that it is intended at the next springs to make an attempt to raise her.

These being the facts of the case, the first question upon which our opinion has been asked is, "Whether the vessel was properly and sufficiently manned?" It seems that she had a crew of 11 hands, of whom six were deck hands, consisting of a master, a mate, and four able seamen. This, as Captain Beddoe, the officer who brought her round, after she had been purchased by Mr. Tomlinson, from Rochester to Liverpool, told us was quite sufficient to form two watches for a vessel of her description, giving an officer and two able seamen to each watch, the master in these small coasting vessels keeping his own watch. The master, however, appointed one of the able seamen, named Winter, to be the acting second mate. He told us that he did so because he did not like to leave the deck in charge of only an able seaman; but we do not exactly see how the status or position of Winter was in any respect altered, save that he had the name of acting second mate, and that he was not required to take the wheel, but in all other respects he remained the same. He received 2s. a week extra for trimming the lamps, but apart from this his wages were only 28s. a week, the same as the other three seamen had. The watches then were thus arranged—the master and Winter had one, and the mate had the other, each watch being four hours long; whilst the other three hands had no particular watch, but each had his turn at the wheel for two hours, and then four hours below. The result of this arrangement was that, except when the master was there, there were never more than two hands on deck, either the mate or Winter in charge, and one man at the wheel, but there was no look-out forward. Such a disposition of the crew the assessors think was not a good one; in their opinion there ought always to have been two men on deck besides the officer of the watch, one at the wheel and one forward on the look-out, and there were hands on board sufficient for that purpose had the master kept his watch in person, as Captain Beddoe did, instead of calling one of the able seamen an acting second mate, and then putting him to do officer's duties. The assessors think that it would perhaps have been better if they had had a fifth hand, even a boy to act as cook and steward, so as to have left the seamen to give all their time to the duty of navigating the ship; but it appears to us that the captain at all events has no

just ground of complaint, for he had accepted the arrangement, and had offered to navigate the vessel with this crew. In his letter to Mr. Amoroso, the manager to Messrs. Japp and Kirby, the brokers to the ship, dated the 15th May 1883, the master says, "At last I have got a crew that will stop on board. The steward did not care for going on deck, so I have got four seamen on deck, and no steward; everybody must cook for themselves now." Whilst then we think that it would perhaps have been better if they had had a boy to act as cook and steward, we are not prepared to say that the vessel was either improperly or insufficiently manned, for it must be remembered that she was only a small coasting vessel, and that it is the practice on board such vessels for the master to keep a watch, as Captain Beddoe did; and had he done so, there were sufficient hands on board for the purpose.

The second question which we are asked is, "Whether the compasses were sufficient in number and in good order, and whether they were so placed as to be as little affected by the cargo as possible?" We are told that there were two compasses on board, both of them being amidships, one in the wheel house on the lower bridge, the other on the upper bridge. In March last, when the vessel was purchased by Mr. Tomlinson, they had been sent on shore, cleaned, and put in order by Messrs. Heath and Co.; and, after they had been sent on board again, the vessel had been taken down to Greenhithe, and swung at the usual place, and her compasses adjusted by Mr. Stebbing, of Southampton, a gentleman who is well known as a compass adjuster, and who has, I am told, for many years adjusted the compasses of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's vessels. Captain Beddoe told us that Mr. Stebbing and his assistant were engaged for some hours adjusting the compasses; and Mr. Stebbing's name is a sufficient guarantee that the work was well and properly done. Captain Beddoe told us that he had proper deviation cards given to him for both compasses, and that in coming round from Rochester to Liverpool on her first voyage he found them to be perfectly correct. The captain however has told us that they were not placed in a proper position, but we are at a loss to see where else they could have been placed; one, the steering compass, was in the wheel house on the lower bridge, just before the helmsman, and at a distance of about 12 feet from the main hatch; the other, the standard compass, was on the upper bridge, and was, we are told, some 22 feet from the main hatch. But then it is said that the cargo which she had on board, consisting of 353 tons of steel ends, might have affected them; but the assessors are of opinion that it could not have done so. Moreover, we have the fact that in the run between Newport and the South Bishops from 8.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m., they were able to keep her on her course; but we were told by the captain that he supposed that the compasses must have gone wrong after the fog set in; so that the disarrangement of the compasses would in that case have been caused, not by the cargo which she had on board, but by the fog. This theory, however, appears to the assessors to be utterly untenable; they think that the compasses were sufficient in number and in good order, and that they were so placed as not to be affected, and that they were not affected, by the cargo.

The third question which we are asked is, "Whether the vessel was supplied with a proper log or other means of testing her speed on her last voyage?" It appears that when the vessel was handed over to Mr. Tomlinson there was a Massey's patent log on board, but of which two blades were gone, and accordingly Mr. Lang, consulting engineer, and who examined the vessel and her machinery before Mr. Tomlinson bought her, thought it would be better to have a new one, and accordingly a new patent log was purchased from Messrs. Heath at a cost of 2*l.* 12*s.* 0*d.*, besides 12*s.* 6*d.* for a line, making 3*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* altogether; and that log, we were told by Captain Beddoe, registered the distance quite correctly; but he said that he always took care to fend it off with an oar so as to avoid the wash from the screw. We have, therefore, no reason to think that the log was not a perfectly good one when properly used.

The fourth question which we are asked is, "Whether proper means were taken to ascertain the vessel's position when passing the South Bishop's Rock; and whether proper courses were set and steered after that time, and proper allowance made for tides and currents?" There is no reason to think that the vessel's position was not properly ascertained when she passed the South Bishops; but the question is, Whether proper courses were set and steered afterwards?

According to the captain, after passing the Bishops, they first steered N.N.E. for an hour, and after that N.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N., and in this he was confirmed by the chief mate; whilst Winter told us that when he came on deck at a little after 11 the course which they were steering was N.E., and that that course was steered during the whole of his watch. But now the question arises, Were these courses the magnetic courses, or were they the courses shewn by the compasses, and by which—the steering compass or the standard compass? The master, indeed, wished us to believe that these were the magnetic courses, and that there was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a point easterly deviation on the steering compass when she was on a N.N.E. course magnetic, and $\frac{1}{2}$ a point easterly deviation on that compass when she was on a N.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. course; so that for the first hour after passing the Bishops the course shewn on the steering compass would be N. by E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E., and after that N.E. by N. That this, however, was not so is clear from the evidence of the mate and of Winter, who told us that the courses which they gave us were the courses by the steering compass; that that was the only compass they consulted; that they didn't know what deviation there was on it; that they kept their watch on the lower bridge, and that they didn't consult the standard compass at all, and don't know what course it shewed. Now, if the evidence of these two men is to be believed, and we prefer it to that of the master, it is clear, seeing that he has himself admitted that the steering compass had a considerable easterly deviation, that the vessel must have been steering a good deal to the eastward of the courses which have been given to us. Captain Beddoe, who has commanded one of the Guion Line of steamers, and appeared to be an officer of considerable experience, and who told us that he assisted to swing the vessel, and on the voyage from Rochester carefully compared the compasses with the deviation cards, told us that the compasses had the largest deviation on a N.E. course, that of the steering compass being 13 degrees easterly deviation, that of the standard compass being 8 degrees on that course. Captain Beddoe also told us that there was an easterly deviation of 2° on a north course, but what it was on the other intermediate points he was not prepared to say. Taking, however, that there was an easterly deviation of 13° on the steering compass on a N.E. course, it is fair perhaps to assume that on a N.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. course there would have been an easterly deviation of at least 11°, or, say, one point, so that when the steering compass shewed N.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N., the vessel was in fact making a N.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E. course, which would be quite sufficient to take her inside Bardsey Island from where she was. We must reject altogether the evidence of the three seamen, who came forward and swore positively that the course which they steered from the Bishops was N.E. by N. $\frac{1}{2}$ N., which it clearly was not, if we are to believe the evidence of the master or of either of the mates. It appears to us then that the courses steered from off the Bishops were neither safe nor proper courses, being about one point more to the eastward than they ought to have been, the courses having been laid by the steering compass, and no allowance having been made either for deviation or for the strong flood tide which was setting her to the eastward.

The fifth question which we are asked is, "Whether a good and proper look-out was kept, and if so, how was it that the Cardigan Bay Light was not seen?" It is extremely difficult for us to say how this occurred, seeing that they must have passed very close to it; and the only suggestion that we can offer is that, when they were in the vicinity of the Light, the fog had already settled down over the water, or that Winter, the man in charge of the deck, could not have been keeping a good look out. Cardigan Bay Light is about 35 miles from the South Bishops, whilst it is only about 27 miles from the place where the vessel took the ground, so that they probably were off the Cardigan Bay Light at about half past 2 or thereabouts; and we have the evidence of both the engineers that from about that time the fog whistle was going, shewing that the fog must at that time have commenced. Be this however as it may, the Light is said not to have been seen.

The sixth question which we are asked is, "Whether, after the weather became thick, the vessel was kept going at a moderate speed?" It seems clear that the engines were kept going at full speed quite up to the last. The master indeed stated that for two hours before she went ashore he had observed that the vessel was going slow, and that consequently he had not, after they entered the fog, altered the telegraph, which pointed to full speed. But both the engineers say that

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the engines were going at full speed, making 62 revolutions, and with a pressure of 58 lbs.; and the chief engineer added that when he went off duty at 4 a.m. he lay down with his clothes on, feeling very anxious on account of the vessel going at full speed through the fog.

The seventh question which we are asked is, "Whether the lead ought to have been used?" It seems that there is a lightship placed in the middle of Cardigan Bay to warn ships against getting too far to the eastward, and thus becoming embayed in Cardigan Bay. It is moored just outside the line of the 30 fathom soundings, and a vessel bound, as this vessel was, from the Bishops to Liverpool, had no business whatever to have gone inside of it. The "Glenocum," however, must, on the course she was steering, have been for some hours before she grounded inside the lightship, and a cast of the lead would have shewn her at once that she was getting into shallow water. When Winter came and told the master at about 2 o'clock that he had not seen the light of the Cardigan Bay Lightship, he ought to have ordered a cast of the lead to be taken, instead of which he tells Winter to return on deck and to keep a good look-out. When again he was called up on deck at twenty minutes past 3, owing to the weather having become foggy, he should then have taken a cast of the lead, instead of which he orders the course to be altered half to a quarter of a point more to the eastward to make Bardsey Light, thinking that he was outside of it. The vessel ought not to have been allowed to get into less than 40 fathoms of water, and a cast of the lead would have shewn him hours before he grounded that he was in less than 30 fathoms, and and that he was gradually shoaling his water.

The eighth question which we are asked is, "Whether the fog signal on Bardsey Island was sounded regularly on the morning of the 23rd of May after the weather became thick?" The chief light keeper from Bardsey Island has told us that the fog set in that morning at 2.30, and that the syren was kept going from that time until noon, sounding about every 5 minutes; and we have no reason to doubt that statement, verified as it is by the entries in the log-book. The fact that it was not heard on board the "Glenocum" is no proof that the syren was not being sounded, for we do not know how far the "Glenocum" may have got to the eastward; and Professor Tyndall's experiments at the North Foreland shew that the distance to which these signals can be heard is very uncertain. There is therefore nothing to shew that the fog signal was not sounded regularly that morning from the time the weather became foggy.

The ninth question which we are asked is, "What was the cause of the vessel stranding?" The cause of the vessel stranding is quite clear. The master laid his courses by the steering compass as though it had no deviation, whereas we were told by Captain Beddoe that on a N.E. course there was an easterly deviation of 13° on that compass, and we shall perhaps not be far wrong when we say that on a N.E. ½ N. course, there was an easterly deviation on the steering compass of about 11° or one point, so that when the compass was pointing N.E. ½ N., the vessel was in fact making a N.E. ½ E. course magnetic, and that would be quite sufficient to take her inside Bardsey Island. The cause of the casualty was that the master chose to lay his courses by the steering compass without making any allowance for deviation, or for the strong flood tide which would be setting him to the eastward for some time after passing the South Bishops.

The tenth question which we are asked is, "Were the master, the second engineer, or either of them in default in regard to any of the above matters?" and it is added that, in the opinion of the Board of Trade, "the certificates of the master and of the second engineer should be dealt with." And, first, as regards the second engineer. He is no doubt an old man, and not very intelligent, but there is no reason to think that the casualty was due to him. He told us that the first order which he got was to slow, that shortly afterwards he got the order to stop, that he executed both those orders, and that then he got the order "full speed astern." By that time, however, the chief engineer had come into the engine-room, and he was told to go and open the auxiliary cock, whilst the chief engineer reversed the engines. It does not appear to us that there was any delay in carrying out the master's orders, but even if there had been, it would not be a case in which we should deal with the second engineer's certificate. The casualty was undoubtedly owing to the vessel having got too far to the eastward of the proper course, and for this the master is alone responsible.

The eleventh question may be more conveniently taken next, it is as follows:—"Does blame attach to the owner or to the light keepers at Bardsey in regard to any of the above matters?" In our opinion no blame attaches either to the owner or to the light keepers at Bardsey in respect of any of the matters which have arisen in this case.

This master charged almost every person, who has had anything to do with this ship, with misconduct. According to him, the vessel was a bad vessel, the bulkheads not being tight; the engines were difficult to reverse; the compasses were out; the deviation cards inaccurate; the log line of no use; the ship was improperly and insufficiently manned; the second engineer was incompetent; the damage to the vessel was trifling, although she filled within a quarter of an hour after striking; and it was owing to Captain Archer's neglect and incompetence that she was not got off and taken into Pwllbeli; and last of all, he has charged Mr. Stebbing, a gentleman of the highest character, with being worse for liquor, when he adjusted the compasses. More gross and unfounded charges could hardly have been made, and then this man, when all his charges have broken down, asks for the indulgence of the Court; in our opinion he does not deserve it. He has grossly misconducted himself, and has added to his misconduct by bringing these false charges against persons of the highest respectability. He has by his gross negligence lost a ship worth something like 6,000l., and a valuable cargo, for which he can make no compensation whatever; had he been able to do so, he ought to make good every penny of that loss, and in suspending his certificate for twelve months, I am of opinion that the sentence is a very lenient one for the offence of which he has been guilty.

The Court, on the application of the master's solicitor, agreed to recommend that during the suspension of his master's certificate he should be allowed a first mate's certificate. The Court was not asked to make any order as to costs.

(Signed) H. C. ROTHERY,
Wreck Commissioner.

We concur.
(Signed) ALFRED PARISH, }
R. WILSON, } ASSASSORS.