

(No. 3512.)

"EASTERN QUEEN."

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

IN the matter of a formal Investigation held at St. George's Hall, Liverpool, on the 10th and 11th days of April 1888, before THOS. STAMFORD RAFFLES, Esquire, Stipendiary Magistrate, assisted by Captains WILSON and HORE, Nautical Assessors, into the circumstances attending the loss of the British sailing ship "EASTERN QUEEN," of Newcastle, through foundering in lat. 46.10 N., long. 11.46 W., on or about the 6th March 1888.

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 said ship was not prematurely abandoned. She foundered in lat. 46.10 N., and long. 11.46 W., in consequence of a sudden leak which they were unable to discover. The wind was light, and they were not able to get her into a port.

Dated this 11th day of April 1888.

(Signed) T. S. RAFFLES, Judge.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) R. WILSON,
KENNETT HORE, } Assessors.

Annex to the Report.

This was an inquiry held at St. George's Hall, Liverpool, into the circumstances attending the loss of the British sailing ship "Eastern Queen," of Newcastle, through foundering in lat. 46.10 N., and long. 11.46 W., on or about the 6th of March last. Mr. Paxton, solicitor, appeared for the Board of Trade, and Mr. George Dickinson for the owners and master of the ship. The "Eastern Queen" was a barque, built at Sunderland in 1864, of 480 tons, registered at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and owned by Mr. Robert Thomas, of Criccieth, in the County of Carnarvon, and several others. She was commanded by Mr. John Rowlands, who holds a certificate of competency as master, No. 98,679, dated in June 1878, and she had a crew of 12 hands all told. She loaded at Hull in February last a cargo of 720 tons of coals, and she left dock on the 21st of that month for Natal, drawing 16 ft. 10 in. forward, and 17 ft. 7 in. aft. Strong easterly breezes prevailed for a week, which detained her in Grimsby Roads, and she did not sail thence till the 27th. There was fine weather in the Channel, and up to the 5th March she continued, making little progress, under all sail with a light easterly and north-easterly wind. They worked the pumps when at sea watch and watch, getting a suck after a spell of two or three minutes. On the 5th of March there was a change. The chief officer reported that at the end of his watch, about 3.45 a.m., after pumping half an hour, there were two feet of water in the well. On this he called the master, who came up immediately, and he and the chief officer and carpenter searched the holds to see if they could discover the leak, but they were unable to find any sign of leakage, and all hands were set to the pumps, and in the course of that day the water increased till, when they last sounded, at 9.30 p.m. there were 11 ft. 3 in. in her. They were in lat. 46.10 N. and long. 11.46 W., about 220 miles from Cape Finisterre.

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It was of no use trying for a port, for there was no wind, and the vessel would only just steer, going about 2 knots. In consequence the boats were got out and provisioned, and the crew got into them about 7 p.m. The master, chief mate, and carpenter remained on board till 10.30 p.m., when they also got into them. They remained by the ship till she went down about 4 a.m. on the 6th. They were picked up by the "Louis M. Lamb," a Chilian vessel bound to Valparaiso, and on the following day were transferred to the "Sympathian," bound for Cardiff, where they were landed on the 10th of March. On the close of the evidence Mr. Paxton asked the following questions:—

1. Whether, having regard to the age of the vessel, she was properly and sufficiently examined and repaired from time to time, and particularly at Hull in February last?
2. Whether, when she left Hull, she was in all respects in good and seaworthy condition?
3. What was the cause of the vessel making so much water on the morning of the 5th March?
4. Were proper and sufficient means taken to ascertain the position of the leak, and every possible effort made to keep the water under?
5. Whether the vessel was prematurely abandoned?
6. Was the master in default in regard to any of the above matters?
7. What was her value when she last left Hull?
8. What were the insurances effected, and how were they apportioned?

Mr. Dickinson addressed the Court, and called Mr. Rees, who surveys for the Nevin Club, and who saw the ship and overhauled her at Hull, and certain repairs were done under his supervision and by his instructions.

The Court answered the questions as follows:—

1. She was, according to the evidence, properly and sufficiently examined and repaired from time to time, upwards of 2,000l. being spent upon her since the purchase. At Hull she was surveyed by Mr. Rees, and repairs were ordered and executed under his supervision. She had been stripped and retalled at Swansea in December 1884, and caulked all over. She received some damage in 1885, being struck by a heavy sea which damaged her top-sides, and she was re-surveyed in Hamburg, in December 1886, by Lloyds' surveyor, and some patches were put on the metal. She was not therefore in dry dock at Hull, but Mr. Armit, the Board of Trade surveyor at Hull, professed himself perfectly satisfied with the condition of the vessel.
2. She appeared to have been in good and seaworthy condition when she left Hull.
3. In all probability she must have started a butt, but there was no evidence to show what was the cause, nor was there any weather to account for it.
4. The master did all he could to ascertain the cause of the leak, but he could not find out any leakage on searching both holds with the assistance of the chief officer and carpenter. Every effort was made by pumping with all hands to keep the water under.
5. The vessel was not prematurely abandoned. There was no wind to take them into a port.
6. The master was not in default.
7. She was valued by the Clubs at 17,000l. on the 1st of January 1888.
8. She was insured for 1,200l. and 300l. on freight at risk. She had been insured for 2,000l., but it had been gradually reduced.

(Signed) T. S. RAFFLES, Judge.

We concur in this report.

(Signed) R. WILSON,
KENNETT HORE, } Assessors.

Liverpool, 11th April 1888.