

OFFICIAL COPY.

(No. 3624.)

"EMMA" (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

In the matter of a formal Investigation held at the Board Room of the Sunderland School Board Offices, John Street, in the Borough of Sunderland, on the 21st day of September 1888, before JOHN POTTS and JAMES HORAN, Esquires, two of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace acting in and for the said Borough, assisted by Captains R. METHVEN, and A. P. FRENCH, Nautical Assessors, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the British steamship "EMMA," of Sunderland, off Cape St. Mathieus, Finisterre, France, on or about the 6th of September 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 stranding was caused through the ship having got too far to the westward. The Court finds the master, William Henry Lambert, in default for such stranding; but considering his previous good character, the Court does not deal with his certificate, but admonishes him to avoid intricate navigation in the night time in future.

Dated this 21st day of September 1888.

(Signed) JOHN POTTS, }
JAMES HORAN, } Judges.

We concur in the above report.

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

Annex to the Report.

The "Emma" was a steamship built of iron at Sunderland in the year 1872, her official number being 95,269, and she was registered at the Port of Sunderland; her dimensions as per register being—length 204 ft. 4-tenths; breadth 27 ft. 3-tenths; and depth of hold 16 ft. 5-tenths. She was schooner-rigged, and fitted with two compound surface-condensing engines, of 80 horses-power combined, the diameter of cylinders being 26½ and 43½ ins. respectively, with a length of stroke of 30 ins. Her gross tonnage was 825.04 tons, and registered 528.87 tons. The vessel was owned by Mr. James Laing, J.P., of Sunderland, and was under the command of William Henry Lambert, who holds a certificate of competency numbered 19,565.

The "Emma" sailed from Sunderland on the 3rd day of September 1888, having on board a cargo of 1,012 tons of coal, including bunker coal, bound to Bordeaux in France. She had a crew of 15 hands all told. Her draught of water on sailing was 17 ft. aft, and 15 ft. 6 ins. forward. The vessel carried three boats, viz., two lifeboats and one jolly boat. She had three compasses fixed—one pole, one on the lower bridge, which was the steering compass, and one aft. She also carried a spare compass, which was in the cabin. The compasses

were last adjusted at Sunderland on the day the vessel sailed, and deviation cards supplied to the ship. The vessel had undergone a special survey for re-registration, after having been purchased from foreigners—French subjects. The vessel proceeded on her voyage, the weather being fine and the sea smooth; all went well, and on the evening of the 6th of September, the ship having arrived off Ushant, the master determined on taking the inshore passage between Ushant and the mainland. At 5.30 p.m. the master went on the bridge and took charge of the navigation. At 8.40 p.m. the Four Lighthouse was drawing abeam east and by south, that is, E. ¾ south magnetic, with the leading lights Point de Kermowan and St. Mathieus in one. The master steered with the lights in one until he made the Corsen Light on the port quarter; a course S. by W. ¾ west was then steered. About 9.35 Corsen Light bore north-north-east, distant about three miles, and St. Mathieus Light S.S.E. ¼ E. about one and a-half miles distant; the course was then altered to south by west. Shortly after a bright light was sighted right ahead, and then a red light, which was taken to be a steamer approaching. The helm was then ported to enable the ship to pass the steamer on the port side, her head being brought to south-west ¾ west; this course was continued until the vessel struck on the Basse du Chenal Rocks, the passing steamer being then abeam, about two ships' lengths on the port side. The vessel struck with her starboard bilge, and heeled to port and passed on, St. Mathieus Light bearing about east, apparently about a mile distant. Finding that the ship was sinking forward, the engines were stopped, and an order given for the boats to be got out; the ship was settling down fast by the head. The jolly boat was got out and the crew got into her, the chief and the master being the last to leave the ship, which went down in deep water about five minutes after she had struck. None of the crew were able to save any of their effects; the master also lost all his effects and the charts. They then made for St. Mathieus Lighthouse, and spoke to the people on shore there, and afterwards, assisted by the flood tide, pulled up to Brest, where they landed at 4 a.m. on 7th September. No lives were lost.

At the conclusion of the evidence the solicitor acting for the Board of Trade submitted the following questions, and desired the opinion of the Court thereon:—

1. What number of compasses had this vessel on board, where were they placed, and were they in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the ship?

Ans.—Three compasses in use, one on the lower bridge, one pole compass, one aft, and one spare one in the cabin. They were sufficient for the safe navigation of the ship.

2. When and by whom were they made, and when and by whom were they last adjusted?

Ans.—There is no evidence before the Court to show who made the compasses. They were adjusted by Messrs. Wilson & Gilkie, compass makers and adjusters, at the commencement of the present voyage.

3. Did the master ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observation from time to time; were the errors of the compasses correctly ascertained, and the proper corrections to the courses applied?

Ans.—There were no sights taken to ascertain the deviation of the compasses, but their correctness was verified by the several courses made good, and by the bearings of lights and headlands during the voyage.

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4. Whether safe and proper courses were set and steered on the evening of the 6th September when the vessel was passing through the Four Channel?

Ans.—The courses were safe and proper up to the point when the ship entered the white sector of Corsen Light. Also whilst steering within the sector of white light a proper course was steered until St. Mathieus Point bore S.S.E $\frac{1}{4}$ E. magnetic. From this point the course was changed to S. and by W., which was also a proper course.

5. Was the master aware of the position of the Basse Chenal Rocks, and if so did he take proper measures to avoid it?

Ans.—From the evidence given the master was well acquainted with the navigation and of the rocks in the vicinity, and he took such measures as the supposed position of the ship seemed proper.

6. Whether a good and proper look-out was kept?

Ans.—A proper look-out was kept.

7. What was the cause of the casualty?

Ans.—The cause of the casualty was the ship having got too far to the westward by the order to port the helm in order to pass an approaching steamer, the channel in this part being very narrow.

8. Whether the vessel was navigated with proper and seamanlike care?

Ans.—The ship was navigated with seamanlike care.

9. Whether the master and officers are, or either of them is, in default?

Ans.—The master alone is in default, in having taken a difficult and dangerous passage at night time.

(Signed) JOHN POTTS, } Justices.
JAMES HORAN, }

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) R. METHVEN, } Assessors.
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