

**OFFICIAL COPY.**

(No. 3643.)

**"SAVANNA."**

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

In the matter of a formal Investigation held at Recorder's Court, Belfast, on the 19th, 20th, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, and 25th days of October 1888, before the Hon. W. FORBES, Stipendiary Magistrate, assisted by Captains FRENCH and RICHARDSON, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the British barque "SAVANNA," of Bridgetown, Barbadoes, official No. 59,207, at or near Kilroot Point, on or about the 29th day 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 vessel was stranded by having been sailed too close into the shore, by the total neglect of the lead, by the leading marks not having been kept in position, and by cross-bearings of the salient points being completely neglected. The Court cancels the certificate of competency granted to John Bensley Collinette, No. 27,523, as second mate. This casualty having occurred through the negligence of the master, Mr. Bensley Collinette, and the reckless navigation of Thomas M<sup>c</sup>Cracken, who was acting as channel pilot, the Court orders the master, Mr. Bensley Collinette, to pay the sum of thirty pounds, and the pilot, Mr. Thomas M<sup>c</sup>Cracken, to pay the sum of sixty pounds to the Solicitor of the Board of Trade on account of the expenses of this investigation.

Dated this 26th day of October 1888.

(Signed) W. FORBES, Judge.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) A. P. FRENCH,  
GEO. RICHARDSON, } Assessors.

*Annex to the Report.*

The "Savanna," official No. 59,207, is a barque built of wood at Clifton, New Brunswick, but the date and name of the builder is unknown. Her dimensions are: Length, 146.2 feet; breadth, 34 feet, and depth of hold 20 feet. Her gross tonnage 760.64; her registered tonnage 749. She was registered at Bridgetown, Barbadoes, on the 23rd of August 1887. Mr. Benjamin Johnson Jancy, of Boston, Massachusetts, United States of America, appears on the certificate of register as the sole owner. On the voyage in question she was commanded by Mr. Bensley Collinette, who held no certificate as master, but who informed the Court that he formerly held a Board of Trade certificate as second mate, No. 27,523, but that he had lost that certificate twenty-five years ago, and could give the Court no information of its whereabouts. It appears from the ship's articles that Frederick Hayes signed in Philadelphia, on board the ship, as first mate, and that he

held no certificate whatever. The agreement with the crew appears to have been made before the British Consul at Philadelphia, and was for a round voyage not to exceed one year, and to terminate at a final port of discharge in the United States. The vessel went to New York in ballast, thence with a cargo of mineral oil to Belfast in Ireland. From there she was towed to Ayr in ballast by the tug-boat "Victor," owned by Mr. Thomas M<sup>c</sup>Cracken, who afterwards made an engagement with the captain to pilot the ship from Ayr down channel as far as Tuskar for the sum of 16*l*. At Ayr the vessel took in a cargo consisting of 950 tons of coal, and the master having engaged a crew, which was sent over from Belfast, and received on board Mr. Thomas M<sup>c</sup>Cracken as channel pilot, he hauled out of the dock into the roadstead, and there discharged a number of riggers, who had been employed because, as the Court was told, the crew were in a state of intoxication, and two men had deserted at the last moment. At this time the vessel was drawing 17 feet 6 inches forward, and 18 feet 1 inch aft. She was taken in tow between 4 and 5 o'clock p.m. on Friday, 28th of September 1888, by an Ayr tug-boat, and proceeded down the Firth of Clyde. It appears from the evidence of the captain that he gave entire charge of the navigation of the vessel to Thomas M<sup>c</sup>Cracken as pilot, and during the night the crew were more or less incapacitated through drink, and the captain does not appear from the evidence to have shown himself on deck until he was called at 3 a.m. on the morning of the 29th September. When the crew arrived at Ayr on the morning of the 28th September they were all more or less under the influence of drink, and, by the orders of the master, the pilot gave them drink during the forenoon. It also appeared in evidence that the crew had several drinks subsequently and previous to sailing, and that liquor was given to them during the night by the pilot. The consequences of this were that most of the crew were unable to do duty during that night. After midnight the "Savanna" having arrived off Ailsa Craig she was cast off by the tug-boat, and after some difficulty canvas was got on the ship, and she proceeded towards Belfast Lough, as the Court was informed, to get some extra hands. The next day, Saturday, 29th of September, the "Savanna" arrived in Belfast Lough, and, according to the pilot's evidence, the wind was (off shore) N.N.W., weather clear. The vessel was sailed close in shore; the lead was never used; no notice was ever taken of the leading marks, and no cross bearings were taken, and at 12.40 p.m. the vessel stranded about three cables' lengths off the shore. She bumped four times, and then heeled over on to her starboard bilge. The vessel began then to swing, her head falling off at times to south, and coming up at other times to W.N.W. The captain then left the vessel in a small boat to engage seamen. The head sails were laid aback and the after yard shivered. The vessel did not come off, but continued to grind on the stony bottom for a space of time variously described to the Court as between three-quarters of an hour and an hour. About 1.30 p.m. the tug-boat "Defence," belonging to the channel pilot, seeing the ensign at the main, went alongside, and, as Mr. Thomas M<sup>c</sup>Cracken said, after six minutes' towing he got the vessel off and towed her into Carrickfergus Roads, where she was anchored, and made a charge of 30*l*. for towing her off. But the Court was informed by another witness, who was watching the vessel from the land, that he saw the vessel float and sail away for ten minutes before the tug got hold of her. The captain returned to

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1888.

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the vessel again that evening, and brought 12 or 13 pumpers, who were set to work to pump the ship out, it having been found, as the Court was told by the pilot, that the vessel was leaking badly. He also told the Court that the mate reported the vessel was not taking up, so the master brought down two gentlemen from Belfast to survey the vessel, viz., Captain Cunningham Flynn, master mariner, and Mr. James Hill, shipwright, who stopped the pumps for an hour, and found the vessel to be making from ten to eleven inches of water in an hour. He heard the surveyors say to the captain that the vessel was not seaworthy, and recommended her to be taken up to Belfast and placed on the mud to save expenses. This was accordingly done, the vessel being towed to Belfast by the same tug and placed on the ground alongside the Princes Dock gate, where she still remains. At high water she is afloat, but at low water she takes the ground, sewing from three to four feet according to the range of tide.

On the conclusion of the evidence the following questions were handed in by Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Tear, the solicitor for the Board of Trade:—

1. Where was the "Savanna" last registered and when, and were the owners British subjects?
2. Where did her present voyage commence and when was it to terminate?
3. Did the master and mate of the vessel hold valid certificates according to their respective positions in the ship?
4. Was liquor given to the crew by the master and pilot, and, if so, was this under the circumstances justifiable?
5. Whether the master was justified in proceeding from Ayr with an intoxicated crew and two hands short?
6. Whether the crew subsequently refused duty?
7. Whether the pilot was licensed or held any certificate as a seaman?
8. Whether the master was justified in giving over to the pilot the complete command and navigation of the vessel?
9. Whether, after entering Belfast Lough, the vessel was kept too close in to the shore, and whether that course was justifiable?
10. Was the lead used?
11. Where did the vessel strand?
12. What was the cause of the stranding of the vessel, and was she materially damaged through such stranding?
13. Whether she was navigated with proper and seamanlike care?
14. Whether the master is in default, and whether blame attaches to the pilot?

Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Lean, solicitor, having addressed the Court on behalf of the master and the pilot, and Mr. M<sup>c</sup>Tear having been heard in reply, the Court proceeded to

give judgment on the questions upon which its opinion had been asked as follows:—

1. The "Savanna" was last registered at Bridgetown, Barbadoes, on the 23rd of August 1887. The owner is Benjamin Johnson Janey, of Boston, Massachusetts, United States.

2. Her present voyage commenced at Philadelphia, and was to terminate at a final port of discharge in the United States.

3. The master held a certificate of competency as second mate under the name of John Bensley Collinette, No. 27,523, but he now goes by the name of Bensley Collinette. He stated to the Court that he had lost that certificate twenty-five years ago, and can give no further account of it. The mate holds no certificate whatever.

4. The evidence shows that liquor was given to the crew by the pilot, through the master's orders, previous to sailing from Ayr, and once during the voyage by the pilot. The Court considers this unjustifiable under the circumstances.

5. The master was not justified in leaving the roadstead at Ayr with an intoxicated crew and two hands short.

6. There is no evidence to show that the crew refused duty.

7. The Court was informed by the pilot that he held no certificate or license from any recognized authority.

8. The master was not justified in giving over the complete command and navigation of the vessel to the pilot.

9. The vessel was kept too close to the shore in Belfast Lough. This act was unjustifiable.

10. It is admitted by everyone that the lead was not used.

11. The vessel was stranded three quarters of a mile to the westward of Kilroot Point, and about three cables' lengths S.S.W. of Milltown Station.

12. The vessel was stranded by having been sailed too close in to the shore, by the total neglect of the lead, by the leading marks not having been kept in position, and by cross bearings of the salient points being completely neglected. Seeing that the vessel commenced leaking badly, and was obliged to abandon her voyage, being pronounced in an unsound state, the Court considers her materially damaged through the stranding.

13. The vessel was not navigated with proper and seamanlike care.

14. Blame attaches both to the master and to the pilot, and the Court pronounces them both to be in default.

(Signed) W. FORBES, Judge.

We concur in the above.

(Signed) A. P. FRENCH,  
GEO. RICHARDSON, } ASSESSORS.

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