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OFFICIAL COPY.

(No. 3571.)

"STAKESBY" (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

In the matter of a formal Investigation held at Cardiff, on the 6th, 7th, and 9th days of July 1888, before THOMAS WILLIAM LEWIS, Esquire, a Stipendiary Magistrate for the Borough of Cardiff, assisted by Captain PARISH and Captain RICHARDSON, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the British Steamship "STAKESBY," of Whitby, on Gadaro Island, Tenedos Channel, Eastern Archipelago, on the 20th May 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 ship stranded on Gadaro Island in consequence of having been steered direct on Gadaro Light through the default of the master, William Gribble, and of the second mate, James Harrison.

The Court suspends the certificate of the master for six, and that of the second mate for nine calendar months.

Dated the 9th day of July 1888.

(Signed) T. W. LEWIS, Judge.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) ALFRED PARISH, } Assessors.
GEO. RICHARDSON, }

Annex.

This case was heard at the Town Hall, Cardiff, on the 6th, 7th, and 9th days of July 1888, when Mr. Waldron appeared for the Board of Trade, Mr. Vachell for the master, Mr. H. M. Rees for the second officer. Mr. Batten attended as counsel to watch the case on the part of the underwriters of the cargo.

The "Stakesby" is an iron screw steamship, built at Sunderland in 1880, of 1,418 gross and 920 registered tonnage, and is fitted with two compound engines of 130 horse power combined. Her length is 243 ft., breadth 34 ft., depth 18 ft.

She was provided with three boats, two of which were lifeboats, all of which are said to have been in good order. She was sufficiently provided with pumps. She had two compasses—one on pole, and the other, by which the ship was steered, on the upper bridge. These compasses were last adjusted at Cardiff by Mr. Ainslie on the 25th January 1888. She was owned by Messrs. Barry and others, Messrs. Rowlands and Christopher, of Whitby, being managers. She was registered at that port, and her official number was 81,215.

The vessel left Taganrog on the 15th May last, with a cargo of 1,760 tons of wheat and a crew of 18 hands all told, bound for London, and was under the command of Mr. William Gribble, who held a certificate of competency as master, No. 03,405.

Her draught of water on leaving that port was 18 ft. 6 in. forward and 18 ft. 8 in. aft, and she appears

to have been in good order and well found in every respect.

She had a collision bulkhead and four watertight compartments.

The ship arrived off Cape Helles at 1 a.m. on the 20th May, the Cape bearing N.N.E.

On passing that point the master steered direct for Gadaro Light, a light placed on a very small circular island, about 50 yards in diameter, in the Tenedos Channel in the Eastern Archipelago, having a shoal extending about half a mile on each side of it. When the master gave the man at the wheel the order to steer this course the second mate, whose watch it was at the time, was standing by and heard what was said. This officer is only 24 years of age, and received his certificate (No. 018,889) as recently as October last. The master states that being unwell and feeling tired he went at 1.15 a.m., being about 12 miles from Gadaro Light, and the Island of Tenedos being distinctly in sight, into the chart-room to rest, but not to sleep, but he admits that he fell asleep. Before retiring he declares that he told the second officer that he was about to go into the chart-room, and was to be called as they got near Gadaro Light.

He further told him that no ships would be met with. The weather at the time was perfectly clear, with a strong breeze from N.N.E.

There was a current running strong to the southward. The second officer positively denied that any directions were given to him by the master. Being left in charge he repeated to the steersman the order which he had heard the master give, viz., to keep the light right ahead. Having done that he seems to have given himself no further trouble about the safety of the ship. He states that he thought the master was somewhere at hand.

When the ship was about to strike, he saw the islet of Gadaro right ahead, and then, at 2.15 a.m., he telegraphed to the engine-room to stop, and immediately afterwards to go full speed astern. He then ran to call the master, and met him at the door of the chart-room. The master states that he had been below for about an hour when he was roused by an unusual motion of the ship. Going on deck he saw the light, distant about 50 yards, flashing on the fore-castle head.

He found the engines stopped, and he at once ordered them to go full speed astern, but in a few seconds the vessel struck on the rock about fifty to a hundred feet from the lighthouse.

The engines were worked astern for about an hour, but without effect. On sounding 15 feet of water was found forward. The ship appeared to be on the rock from her fore-foot to the fore-rigging. The tanks were sounded, but were found dry. The fore-peak however was found full of water up to the level of the sea. A tug came alongside at daybreak, and the master went in her to Shenac to seek for help. He there found a salvage company, represented by a Mr. Wardle, an Englishman, with whom he made an agreement to get the ship off the rock and make her fit to go to Constantinople (the company finding all necessary labour and materials) for 2,200*l.*, the sum first asked being 2,500*l.*

This demand the master admits appeared to him exorbitant, but believing that the ship would break up if immediate steps were not taken, he considered it better to accept it rather than risk the loss of the ship and cargo, which he estimated at 30,000*l.*

Mr. Wardle with the master went to the ship on the 20th May, at 2 p.m., with two tugs, one fitted with a centrifugal pump, lighters, and two divers, and at 8.30 p.m.,

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when the weather moderated, began operations by removing 600 tons of the cargo.

The divers reported two holes in the fore-peak, one being three feet long and about two inches on the fore side of the collision bulkhead. The divers temporarily stopped the leak. On the morning of the 22nd they continued to discharge cargo, the ship bumping heavily on the rock. The wind shifted and the sea rose much higher than usual, and the ship came off the rock, using her own steam, and was taken to Zukeri Bay, where the fore-peak was pumped out. The cargo which had been removed from her was reshipped, and she proceeded to Constantinople, where further repairs were done and two surveys were held by Lloyds' surveyors, who pronounced her seaworthy.

The vessel left Constantinople on the 29th May, and arrived in safety in London on the 17th June. The ship is now in dry dock at Newport completing her repairs.

The cargo was delivered in good order, only two or three bags being damaged.

The following questions were submitted to the Court by Mr. Waldron, and he asked that the certificates of the master and second officer should be dealt with:—

1. What was the cause of the stranding of the vessel?
2. Whether the master was on deck at a time when the safety of the vessel required his personal supervision?
3. Whether, before leaving the deck about 1.10 a.m., the master left proper and sufficient instructions with the second officer as to the navigation of the vessel and the courses to be steered, and if so, whether the second officer carried out the instructions given to him?
4. Whether the second officer took proper measures with a view to the safe navigation of the vessel after the master left the deck? whether he took the bearings of the Gadaro Light from time to time, and if so, whether he was justified in neglecting to call the master upon approaching it, or in neglecting to alter the course so as to keep the vessel clear of the island?
5. Whether a good and proper look-out was kept?
6. Whether the vessel was navigated with proper and seamanlike care?

And, finally, whether the master and officers are, or either of them is, in default?

The following answers were given to the foregoing questions:—

1. The vessel was stranded through having been steered direct for the Gadaro Light and the course not altered before she struck.
2. The master was not on deck at a time when the safety of the vessel required his personal supervision.
3. When the master left the deck about 1.15 a.m. on 20th May, he did not leave proper and sufficient instructions with the second mate as to the navigation of the vessel. The helmsman was ordered, in the hearing of

the second mate, to steer direct for the Gadaro Light, which was a proper course at the time it was given, if not continued too long.

The second mate denies having received any instructions whatever from the master. If, as the master stated, he instructed the second mate to call him when near Gadaro Light, this instruction was not carried out.

4. The second mate took no measures with a view to the safe navigation of the vessel after the master left the deck. It was not necessary to take the bearings of Gadaro Light, as the vessel was heading directly towards it.

He was not justified in neglecting to call the master on approaching it. When he realized the danger it was too late to avoid the stranding by any alteration of the course.

5. A look-out man was stationed on the fore-castle head, but it cannot be said that a good and proper look-out was kept.

6. The vessel was not navigated with proper and seamanlike care after 1.15 a.m. of the 20th May.

7. The Court finds the master in default. It is fair to assume that this casualty, with its heavy attendant expenses, would not have occurred had he been on deck to attend personally to the navigation of his vessel. The Court would not have been disposed to blame him for going into the chart-room for a short time after clearing the Dardanelles and setting the course for Gadaro Light, provided he had left unmistakable instructions with the second mate, when leaving him in charge of the deck, to call him at a special time when he knew the vessel would have been approaching to within 3 or 4 miles of the light. Accepting his statement that he told the second mate to call him when near the light, such an order was too indefinite, especially when given to an inexperienced officer, to ensure his being called in proper time.

The result of his absence from the deck has been the stranding of this vessel, and the Court feels it its duty to suspend his certificate for six calendar months.

The Court finds the second mate also in default. It is inconceivable that, with or without any order as to calling the master, a certificated officer left in charge of the vessel, and told to steer direct for a light, should have continued to do so, however ignorant he may have been of the navigation, until a minute or two before the vessel struck only 50 or 100 yards from the light-house he was steering for.

He has, in the opinion of the Court, shown himself unfit at present to take charge of the deck as second mate, and the Court suspends his certificate for nine calendar months from this date.

(Signed) T. W. LEWIS.

ALFRED PARISH.
GEORGE RICHARDSON.

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