

(No. 3889.)

"HORSLEY" (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

In the matter of a formal Investigation held at the Public Board Room, Post Office Chambers, Middlesbrough, on the 3rd & 4th days of October 1889, before RAYLTON DIXON (Mayor) and HENRY THOMPSON, Esquires, two of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the borough of Middlesbrough, assisted by Captains WARD and BRAGG, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the British steamship "HORSLEY," of Hartlepool, at or near Killagrunden, near Trelleborg, south coast of Sweden, on or about the 3rd August last.

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 by the vessel being steered on a course too near the reef, in thick weather, without ordinary precautions due to safe navigation being taken. The Court finds the master in default, and suspends his certificate, No. 08,466, for a period of three months from this day.

Dated this 4th day of October 1889.

(Signed) RAYLTON DIXON, } Justices.
HENRY THOMPSON, }

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) C. Y. WARD, } Assessors.
J. THRELFALL BRAGG, }

Annex to the Report.

The "Horsley," official number 70,123, is an iron screw steamer, built at Hartlepool in 1876, at which port she was registered. Her length is 243.2 feet, breadth 32.3 feet, and depth 18 feet, and her tonnage—after deducting 481.08 tons for engine room and crew spaces—is 871.36 tons, and she is propelled by two compound engines of 120 horses power combined. There were three compasses on board—a pole compass, by which the vessel was steered, a binnacle compass on the upper bridge, and one aft. There was also a "palinurus" compass corrector on board, and she was well found in other respects. She is owned by Mr. George Horsley and others; Messrs. George and Matthew Henry Horsley being the managing owners.

The vessel left Blyth on the 31st of July last, bound to Cronstadt with a cargo of 1,553 tons of coals, under the command of Mr. Joseph Bruce, who holds a certificate of competency as master, and with a crew of 19 hands all told. Her draught of water was 17 ft. 10 in. forward, and 18 ft. 3 in. aft. The weather was fine on leaving Blyth, and continued so crossing the North Sea, and all went well until the time of the casualty.

At 7.10 a.m. on the 3rd August the vessel passed south of Falsterbo Lightship, at an estimated distance of half a mile, from which point a course was set and said to be steered E. by S. magnetic. The weather was fine, with a light southerly breeze. A thick haze was over the land, which could be only indistinctly seen, objects on it not being distinguishable. To seaward the haze was not so thick, vessels being seen at a distance of three to four miles. This course was continued until 8.45 a.m., when it was altered to E. by S. $\frac{1}{2}$ S. magnetic, which was steered until 9 a.m., when it was changed to E.S.E magnetic. The engines were at full speed, the vessel making about eight knots an hour through the water. After passing Falsterbo the haze over the land became thicker. Until 8.30 the second mate was in charge, when he was relieved by the mate, and shortly after the master went on the bridge and assumed charge, on which the mate left. At about

9.20 a.m. the vessel struck on the Kullagrunden Reef, nothing having been seen to indicate that the vessel was in a dangerous position.

The engines were stopped and reversed, when she moved about 150 feet, and again took the ground aft. The engines were then stopped, a boat was lowered, and soundings taken around the vessel, 16 to 19 feet being found close to, and 22 feet on the starboard bow. A light anchor with a 7-inch hawser was laid out to starboard and hove on, but it came home. It was laid out a second time and hove on again, assisted by the engines, but the propeller struck the rocks, breaking two of the blades and becoming fixed, on which further efforts to heave the vessel off were abandoned. A boat was sent ashore, and communication was made by telegraph for assistance to be sent from Copenhagen. At 4 p.m. a tug steamer arrived at the vessel, and at 6 p.m. commenced to tug. At 7 p.m. the "Horsley" was pulled off the rock and towed to Copenhagen, her own engines working at half speed. On coming off the rocks she was found to be making water forward, which, however, was kept under by the donkey pump.

When sounding round the vessel after stranding, the mate saw the Kullagrunden Beacon about a quarter of a mile on the starboard beam, bearing S.W. The lead was not used before the vessel stranded, and there was no one on the look-out except the master.

The master stated that he had taken observations with the "palinurus" for the deviation of the compasses on S.E. and easterly courses on the day previous to the casualty.

At Copenhagen the cargo was discharged and the vessel placed on a slip, when it was found she was materially damaged. Temporary repairs were effected, and on the 18th August she proceeded in ballast to Skelleftea, where she loaded a cargo of deals for London, arriving at that port on 5th September.

At the conclusion of the evidence, Mr. Burton submitted the following questions for the opinion of the Court. Mr. Tilly addressed the Court on behalf of the master, and Mr. Burton replied, on which the Court proceeded to answer the questions and deliver judgment:—

Questions.

1. What number of compasses had the vessel on board, where were they placed, and were they in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel?
2. When and by whom were they made, and when and by whom were they last adjusted?
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?
4. Whether proper measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about 7.15 a.m. of the 3rd August?
5. Whether a safe and proper course was set at or about 7.15 a.m. of the 3rd August and thereafter steered, and whether due and proper allowance was made for tide and currents?
6. Whether safe and proper alterations were made in the course at or about 8.45 a.m. of the 3rd August and from time to time thereafter, and whether due and proper allowance was made for tide and currents?
7. Whether, having regard to the thick state of the weather, the vessel was navigated at too great a rate of speed?
8. Whether the total neglect of the lead was justifiable?
9. Whether a good and proper look-out was kept?
10. What was the cause of the casualty?
11. Whether the vessel was navigated with proper and seamanlike care?
12. Whether the master and officers are, or either of them is, in default?

In the opinion of the Board of Trade, the certificate of Joseph Bruce, the master, should be dealt with.

To which the Court replied as follows:—

1. There were three compasses on board—one pole compass at the fore part of the bridge (about 8 feet from the wheel), one binnacle compass on the upper

bridge, and one aft. They were in good order, and sufficient for the safe navigation of the ship.

2. There was no evidence to show by whom the compasses were made. They were last adjusted by Mr. T. L. Ainsley, of South Shields, on the 18th September 1886.

3. The master stated that he ascertained the errors of the compasses by the use of a "palinurus" compass corrector on every available opportunity. The Court has no reason to suppose that the errors were not correctly ascertained, nor that the proper corrections were not applied.

4. For all practical purposes, proper measures were taken to ascertain the position.

5. Taking into account the thick hazy state of the weather, the course set and steered was not a safe and proper one. No allowance was made for tide and currents.

6. With reference to the last answer, it cannot be said that safe and proper alterations were made.

7. The vessel was not navigated at too great a rate of speed.

8. The non-use of the lead was not justifiable.

9. A good and proper look-out was not kept.

10. The casualty was caused by the vessel being steered on a course too near the reef in thick weather, without the ordinary precautions due to safe navigation being taken.

11. Having regard to the foregoing answers, it cannot be said that the vessel was navigated with proper and seamanlike care.

12. The master alone is in default, and we suspend his certificate for three months from this day.

Dated this 4th day of October 1889.

(Signed) RAYLTON DIXON, } Justices.
HENRY THOMPSON, }

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) C. Y. WARD, } Assessors.
J. THREEFALL BRAGG, }

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