

(No. 3868.)

"LINDISFARNE" (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1876.

In the matter of a formal Investigation held at the Town Hall, North Shields, on the 3rd and 4th days of September 1889, before RALPH COLLINS and JOHN F. SPENCE, Esquires, assisted by Captains R. HARLAND and G. KENNETT HORE, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the S.S. "LINDISFARNE," of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on the 22nd of July 1889.

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 casualty was caused by the master proceeding at too great a rate of speed in thick weather, and through not having verified his position before setting or altering his courses, and the Court finds the master, Robert Reuben Bishop, alone in default, and suspends his certificate, No. 26,599, for a period of three calendar months from the date hereof.

Dated this 9th day of September 1889.

(Signed) RALPH COLLINS, } Justices.  
JOHN F. SPENCE, }

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) ROBERT HARLAND, } Assessors.  
KENNETT HORE, }

Annex to the Report.

This is an investigation into the circumstances attending the stranding of the s.s. "Lindisfarne," of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, held at the Town Hall, North Shields, before Ralph Collins, Esquire, Mayor of Tyne-mouth, and John F. Spence, Esquire, two of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace, assisted by Captains Harland and Kennett Hore (nautical assessors). Mr. F. W. Dendy appeared on behalf of the Board of Trade, and Mr. H. A. Adamson represented the master and owners. The "Lindisfarne," official number 60,541, is a screw steamer, built of iron in 1870, of the following dimensions:—Length, 244.7; breadth, 30.65; and depth, 17.5; of 1,205.78 gross, and 784.04 registered tonnage. She is fitted with two compound direct-acting surface-condensing engines of 99 horse-power (combined), is schooner rigged, and owned by Mr. I. O. Scott, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and another, Mr. Scott having been appointed managing owner on the 1st of November 1875. From the evidence adduced before the Court it appears that the "Lindisfarne" left the Tyne on the 16th of July 1889 in water ballast, having a crew of 17 hands all told, under the command of Robert Reuben Bishop, who held a certificate of competency, No. 26,599, bound for Archangel, the vessel drawing 8 ft. 6 in. forward, and 13 ft. 6 in. aft, being well found and in good condition. She was supplied with 3 compasses, all mounted and in use, viz., a pole and a steering compass on the bridge, and a steering compass aft, made by Blakeney & Co. The pole was 20 ft. high from the main-deck, and 9 ft. from the bridge, and they were last adjusted on the 18th of April 1889 off the Tyne, by Morton, of Shields. She had three boats, viz., a lifeboat, a cutter, and a jolly-boat; and the master had C. Wilson's Sailing Directions and Chart of the Coast of Norway and White Sea, dated 1889, by which the vessel was navigated. At 9 a.m. of the 22nd of July North Cape was sighted, bearing S. to S.S.W., estimated distance 3 to 4 miles. The vessel then steered N.E. for half an hour, going about 5 knots (the North Cape then being out of sight) till 9.30 a.m., when a course E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  S. magnetic was set and steered until 1.30 p.m., when the log shewed the vessel had run 40 miles in the interval, that is, from 9 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. The course was then altered to S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  E. magnetic, and at 6.30 p.m. land was sighted on the starboard

beam from half a mile to a mile off, the weather being thick over the land, and the vessel going full speed. The helm was put hard-a-starboard, and the vessel went off 2 points easterly, and then struck on some rocks about a quarter to half a mile off the land on her starboard bilge under the engine-room, and within five minutes of the land having been seen. The engines were stopped and soundings taken round the vessel, when 18 to 20 ft. was found forward, shoaling to 10 ft. amidships, and deepening to 14 ft. aft, rock bottom, the tide being last hour ebb. No wind, and sea smooth. The water was pumped out of the after ballast tank, and the vessel came off on the flood tide, between 9 and 9.30 p.m., by her own engines; but the propeller being damaged in all blades, one  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ft. off, one 4 ft. off, one 18 to 20 in. off, and one 5 or 6 in. off, the nominal length of blades being 5 ft. long. The vessel proceeded to Archangel, arriving there on the 25th, having stranded on the coast of Finmark, 28 miles N.W. of the Island of Vardo. A survey was held, and a damaged plate under the boiler was temporarily repaired and the vessel loaded for Hull, taking in 440 standards of deals, where she arrived on the 16th of August and discharged her cargo. She then proceeded to the Tyne, and was put into Messrs. Smith's dry dock on the 20th of August, where 9 plates were renewed on the starboard side, 1 plate on the port side, and part of the keel and a new propeller was fitted. In the opinion of the Court this is a case in which the casualty was brought about by the vessel going at too great a rate of speed in thick weather, and through altering the course to the southward, viz., S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  E. magnetic, and proceeding on that course without verifying the position of the ship at 1.30 p.m. The vessel passed the North Cape at 9 a.m., when it bore south 3 to 4 miles distant. A course was then steered N.E. for 5 miles to give a greater offing, and at 9.30 a course E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  S. magnetic was set and steered till 1.30 p.m., by which time the vessel had run 40 miles according to the shewing of the taffrail log. Although close to high land the weather was so thick that nothing had been seen since leaving the North Cape. At 1.30 p.m. the course was altered to S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  E. magnetic, which would have been a very close course to have set in fine weather and under the most favourable circumstances, but as no land had been seen and no sights taken it was a highly dangerous course to set and steer; moreover, there was a quarter of a point easterly deviation on this point of the compass, and the variation which had been 5° westerly had nearly disappeared, and hence the vessel was not making the course the master stated when the alteration was made at 1.30 p.m. To alter the course to S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  E., after the vessel had gone only 40 miles from an assumed position off the North Cape, was a very improper alteration to make, considering the state of the weather, and the subsequent stranding of the vessel was brought about by this having been done. In the Sailing Directions (page 417) the master is especially advised to steer 50° east of the North Cape before altering to the southward, but, by his own shewing, he had only made 40 miles, and in the state of the weather could not be sure he had made even that. That there should have been no one on deck except the master and the man at the wheel, considering the state of the weather, is still more reprehensible, the second mate and the watch being engaged in clearing out the holds, but in such deep water, 150 fathoms, we do not think the lead would have been of much service to him, and that fact alone should have pointed out to the master that a stricter look-out was imperative, and that at such times the officer of the watch should not have been below.

At the conclusion of the evidence the following questions were submitted to the Court on behalf of the Board of Trade:—

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 at or about 9.30 a.m. of the 22nd July last, and from time to time thereafter, to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel?

5. Whether a safe and proper course was set at or about 9.30 a.m. of the 22nd July, 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 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 a good and proper look-out was kept?

9. Whether the total neglect of the lead was justifiable?

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 Robert Reuben Bishop, the master, should be dealt with.

1. The vessel was supplied with three compasses, viz., a pole compass, a steering compass on the lower bridge, and a binnacle compass aft. They were in good order and sufficient for the navigation of the vessel.

2. They were made in 1870 by Blakeney & Co., and they were last adjusted by Morton, of South Shields, on the 18th of April 1889.

3. The master did not ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observation from time to time, but

stated that he verified the correctness of his compasses from time to time when opportunity occurred by bearings taken from objects on shore.

4. No measures were taken at 9.30 a.m. of the 22nd July, or from time to time thereafter, to verify the position of the vessel.

5. A safe course was set at 9.30 a.m. of the 22nd July. No allowance seems to have been made for tide or current.

6. A safe and proper alteration was not made in the course thereafter, and no allowance was made for tide or current.

7. The vessel was navigated at too great a rate of speed.

8. The usual look-out from the upper bridge was kept by the officer on watch.

9. Taking into consideration the nature of the soundings off East Finmark the lead would have been of little service.

10. The casualty was caused by the master proceeding at too great a rate of speed in thick weather, and through not having verified his position before setting or altering his courses.

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

The Court finds the master alone in default, and suspends his certificate, No. 26,599, for a period of three calendar months from the date hereof.

(Signed) RALPH COLLINS, } Justices.  
JOHN F. SPENCE, }

We concur in the above judgment.

(Signed) ROBERT HARLAND, } Assessors.  
KENNETT HORE, }

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