

(No. 4360.)

"COVENTINA" (S.S.)

FINDING and Order of a Naval Court held at Alexandria on the 18th, 19th, and 20th days of August 1891, to investigate the circumstances attending the running ashore of the British steamship "COVENTINA," of the Port of Newcastle-on-Tyne, official number 83,886, when on a voyage from Blyth to Alexandria, and the cause of such running ashore, and to enquire into the conduct of the master and certificated second mate of the said vessel.

The "Coventina" is a steam vessel, schooner-rigged, of 1,061 tons registered tonnage, official number 83,886, built at Jarrow in 1880, and belonging to the Port of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

It appears from the evidence given before this Court that she sailed from Blyth on or about the 17th July 1891, bound for Alexandria with a cargo of coals, and a crew of 23 hands all told, and that everything went well with the ship till 12 o'clock noon of August 1st, when observations for latitude were obtained, and the ship's position marked on the chart from this latitude and the dead reckoning. Sights for longitude were obtained at 4 and 5 p.m., and the positions thus found marked on the chart; the latitudes used for computing these sights were obtained by dead reckoning from noon. These latitudes were found subsequently by the Court to be incorrect, placing the ship five miles north, and therefore further from the land than the true position of the ship. These errors in latitude caused an error in the longitude, computed of one mile. At 4 p.m. the course was ordered to be altered to E.S.E. from S.E. by E. $\frac{1}{4}$ E. No further alteration was ordered previous to the casualty. The ship grounded on the 2nd instant (August) at 3.45 a.m. one mile south-east of Ishalla Rocks, latitude $31^{\circ} 30' N.$, longitude $26^{\circ} 42' E.$

The Court having regard to the circumstances above stated, and having heard and carefully considered the evidence, finds as follows:—

That the causes contributing to the casualty were as follows:—

1. An error of five miles in the position of the ship as marked on the chart, due to incorrect calculation.
2. The difficulty of keeping the ship accurately on her course owing to her steering badly habitually and carrying considerable starboard helm.
3. Want of due care in the navigation of the ship.

The Court finds that the ship was properly supplied with compasses, which appeared to be in good working order, and the chart used was a sufficient guide for safe navigation. The ship was a well found one.

The Court is of opinion that the master and first officer are to blame.

The master, inasmuch as he did not ascertain the latitude used for computing sights at 5 p.m. to be five miles to the northward of the correct dead reckoning latitude, and inasmuch as he did not see that a proper record of the working of the dead reckoning was kept on board, and inasmuch as he did not navigate the ship with due care.

The first officer, inasmuch as he did not make proper entries in his log-book by which the dead reckoning could be computed, and on the occasion of taking sights at 5 p.m., on August 1st, he made an error in his calculations for latitude of five miles from noon to 5 p.m. by the data since furnished to the Court for testing the accuracy of the position.

The Court finds that after stranding proper and effective measures were taken to get the ship off, and that the master displayed great promptitude and energy in jettisoning the cargo, laying out anchors and hawsers, and in getting her to Alexandria without assistance on the 6th instant.

The Court considers that the master deserves great credit for the manner in which he acted after the stranding of the vessel.

The second mate appears to have kept his watch with vigilance and proper care, to have carried out the captain's orders with reference to easing engines in thick weather, and the Court exonerates him from all blame.

The Court finds that the log-book has been carelessly and ill-kept.

Therefore, in view of the above-mentioned circumstances previous to the stranding, the Court orders that William Arnott, master of the steamship "Coventina," be and he is hereby severely censured for his neglect of duty.

And, further, the Court orders that Thomas George Ramsay, first mate of the steamship "Coventina," be and he is hereby severely reprimanded for his carelessness in keeping the log-book and his neglect in not keeping a full record of his work for navigation.

The expenses of this Court, fixed at 17l. 19s. 6d., are approved.

(Signed) ARTHUR D. ALBAN,
President of Naval Court, H.B.M.
Acting Consul-General at Alexandria.

F. W. BARRETT,
Lieut. R.N., H.M.S. "Amphion," at Alexandria,

T. G. DAVIS,
Lieut. R.N.R., H.M.S.
"Amphion," at Alexandria,

JAS. W. STEPHENSON,
Master of merchant ship
"Veribus Unitis," of
London,

THOMAS RAE KYDD,
Master of British merchant ship "Provincia,"
of Glasgow,

Members.

Dated at Alexandria this 20th day of August 1891.