

(No. 4302.)

"FAIRY" (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1887.

In the matter of a formal Investigation held at the Town Hall, Hull, on the 12th and 13th days of May 1891, before E. C. Twiss, Esquire, Stipendiary Magistrate, assisted by Captain PARISH and Captain WARD, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the British steamship "FAIRY," of Hull, near Kilusea Warren, Yorkshire, on the 5th of April 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 of the said vessel was due to the master having been over confident as to his position at 10.55 p.m., and to his having in consequence steamed towards the land in a dense fog without keeping the hand lead going. The Court finds the master, Mr. John W. H. Wood, in default, but does not deal with his certificate.

Dated this 14th day of May 1891.

(Signed) E. C. Twiss, Judge.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) ALFRED PARISH, } Assessors.
C. Y. WARD, }*Annex to the Report.*

This inquiry was held at the Town Hall, Hull, on the 12th and 13th days of May instant, when Mr. Saxelbye represented the Board of Trade, and Mr. Rollit appeared on behalf of the master.

The second officer and second engineer were also parties to the inquiry, and appeared in person, but were not represented by counsel or solicitor.

The "Fairy," official number 60,123, is an iron screw steamer, built in 1868 at Hull, at which port she is registered. She is of the following dimensions:—Length 195.2 ft., breadth 26.4 ft., and depth of hold, 15.3 ft., and her registered tonnage, after deducting 225.63 tons, 407.05 tons.

She is fitted with triple inverted compound engines of 90 h.p. combined.

She is owned by Mr. Walter Samuel Bailey, of Hull, and others, the former being her managing owner.

The "Fairy" left Antwerp at 8 p.m. on the 4th of April last, under the command of Mr. John W. H. Wood, who holds a certificate of competency as master, number 91,260, with a crew of seventeen hands all told, and nine passengers, and a general cargo of about 350 tons, bound for Hull.

Her draught of water on leaving was 13 ft. 3 in. aft., and 9 ft. 8 in. forward.

The vessel proceeded on her voyage, and at 7 p.m. on the 5th of April she passed the Dudgeon Lightship at a distance of about a mile, and bearing N.E. by E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E., the wind being strong from E.S.E., the weather hazy, and a swell from the northward. The patent log registered 50 miles and a quarter. From thence a course N.W. by N. $\frac{1}{4}$ N. magnetic was steered until 9.30 p.m., the engines being at full speed, and the vessel making about 9 knots an hour. At 9.30 p.m. the course was altered to N.W. by N. magnetic, and on this course the vessel proceeded at full speed until 10 p.m., when the engines were stopped and soundings taken in eight and a half fathoms small stones. The patent log then showed, according to the statement of her second officer, 76 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles. At this time the weather was very thick. After soundings had been taken, the engines were put slow ahead on the same course until 10.30 p.m., when the vessel was again stopped and soundings taken in 8 fathoms, small stones, the patent log then showing 81 miles. The vessel was kept stopped until 10.55 p.m., when soundings were again taken in 8 fathoms, stones.

The master now estimated his position to be about half a mile to the northward of the Spurn Lightship, and he ordered the engines slow ahead, and steered N.W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. magnetic, with the intention of passing between the lightship and the Spurn Light. At this time there was a dense fog, and no lights were seen nor fog signal heard from the lightship.

The vessel was kept slow ahead at about two to three knots until 11.20 p.m., when breakers on the port bow were reported by the look-out man from the fore-castle head. The master, who was on the bridge, immediately ordered the helm hard-a-port and the engines to be stopped, and this was done, but the vessel at once took the ground all along and remained fast. A few minutes afterwards, the master, being of opinion that the vessel had struck on the outer edge of the Middle Bank, and seeing that it was now about two hours flood, ordered the helm hard-a-starboard, and the engines full speed ahead, thinking that with the rising tide she would go over the bank into deep water. The engines were kept full speed ahead until about 3 a.m. on the 6th, when the tide began to ebb, and it having then become obvious that the vessel would not float that tide, they were stopped.

In the meantime rockets had been fired and blue lights shown, and two moving lights were seen ahead, which afterwards proved to be lights carried by the coastguard men on the beach. At daylight the vessel was found stranded off Kilusea Warren, within about 50 or 60 yards from high-water mark. There was a heavy sea running and no boat could be lowered, but the coastguard brought down the rocket apparatus and effected a communication with the vessel, by which means all the passengers were safely landed between five and six o'clock the same morning. At low water, about 9.20 a.m., the vessel was high and dry, and a kedg anchor, with 80 or 90 fathoms of wire rope attached, was laid out in a north-easterly direction, and when the tide rose the engines were put full speed astern, and the kedg was hove on to, but the vessel would not move, though she bumped heavily, but made no water. Efforts were made from time to time to get her off, and on the 10th three tugs came off to her assistance, but were unable to do anything. All the sand, about 140 tons, was jettisoned from the after hold, and on the 14th the general cargo was commenced to be discharged into carts alongside at low water, and by the 22nd the whole of the cargo was discharged. The starboard bower anchor was laid out with 75 fathoms of cable, and backed by a second bower with 30 fathoms, and on the 24th the tug "Humber," with the assistance of the "Fairy's" own engines, succeeded in towing her off the beach and bringing her into the Humber, when the tug was cast off, and the vessel proceeded under her own steam to Hull, where she anchored in the roads at 7.40 p.m., having made no water since the casualty. She was afterwards put on the slip, and it was found that she had sustained material damage.

These were the facts of the case, as elicited from the evidence of the several witnesses. It may be mentioned that the master had been for more than 20 years in the employ of the owners of the "Fairy," who, through their superintendent, Captain Martin, expressed their entire confidence in him.

At the conclusion of the evidence, Mr. Saxelbye submitted the following questions, upon which the Board of Trade desired the opinion of the Court:—

1. Whether safe and proper courses were set and steered after passing the Dudgeon Lightship on the night of the 5th April?
2. Whether proper or any allowance was made for tide, currents and wind, and beam sea?
3. Whether proper measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at about 10 p.m., and from time to time thereafter?
4. Whether the master was justified in assuming that he was abreast of the Spurn Lightship at about 10.55 p.m., and did he then make a safe and proper alteration in the course?
5. Whether, having regard to the state of the weather and the circumstances, the lead was used with sufficient frequency, especially after 10.55 p.m.?
6. Whether a good and proper look-out was kept?
7. What was the cause of the casualty?

8. Whether, after the stranding, the master made proper or any efforts to get his vessel off?

9. Whether he was justified a few minutes after the stranding in putting the engines full speed ahead, and keeping them full speed until 3 a.m. the next morning?

10. Whether the vessel was navigated with proper and seamanlike care?

11. Whether the master is in default?

The Board of Trade is of opinion that the certificate of the master should be dealt with.

Mr. Rollit, having called one witness, then addressed the Court on behalf of the master, and Mr. Saxelbye having replied, the Court gave judgment as follows:—

1. Safe and proper courses were set and steered after passing the Dudgeon Lightship on the 5th of April last up to 10.30 p.m.

2. Proper allowance was made for tide, wind, and sea.

3. The only available means the master had of ascertaining and verifying the position of the vessel was by having recourse to the lead, and this was done up to 10.55 p.m., but not afterwards.

4. The master was justified in assuming that he was near the Spurn Lightship at about 10.55 p.m. on the night in question, but there was not sufficient certainty as to his position to justify him in acting as he did, and the alteration then made in the course was not safe and proper.

5. The lead was used with sufficient frequency up to 10.30 p.m., but after that the hand lead should in the opinion of the Court have been kept going.

6. A good and proper look-out was kept.

7. The casualty was due to the master having been over confident as to his position at 10.55 p.m., and to his having in consequence steamed towards the land in a dense fog without keeping the hand lead going, which would clearly have warned him that he was running into danger.

8 and 9. A few minutes after the stranding the master, having come to the conclusion that the vessel was on the outer edge of the Middle Bank, put the engines full speed ahead, thinking that with the rising tide she would go over the bank into deep water, and kept them at full speed for three hours and a half.

The Court considers that he committed a great error of judgment in doing this.

Every effort was made afterwards to get the vessel off, and eventually with success.

10. Up to 10.30 p.m. the vessel was navigated with proper and seamanlike care, but not afterwards.

11. The Court, for the reasons given in reply to previous questions, cannot but pronounce the master in default, but at the same time it considers that it is a case where a lenient course may be adopted, and it does not therefore deal with his certificate. The Court however trusts that this will be a serious warning to the master in the future to be less confident as to an assumed position, and when approaching the land in thick weather to have constant recourse to the lead.

(Signed) E. C. Twiss, Judge.

We concur.

(Signed) ALFRED PARISH.
C. Y. WARD.

The M

In the mat
Court
days of
GRIENS
J. THR
tending
"FLOW
the Ri
25th N

The Cou
circumstances
casualty, f
hereto, th
courses set
the master
verify the
Light; fin
in default
period of
as to cost
grant the
of his susy

Dated: th

(S

We co

(S

This inc
on the 11
Sheriff H
and Bragg
Mr. Her
of Trade
master; L
and Mr.
mate.

The "
screw ste
her dime
breadth 3
2,041.41 g
She is
direct-act
power.
Street, L
registered

On the
bound fo
board 350
ballast in
draught
forward.

Mr. Will
competen
She had
jolly-boa
Trade rec
follows:
of the u
wheelho
for steeri
the whee
to steer
appears t
leaving l
the mast