

(No. 4603.)

## "JANUS" (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Acts, 1854 to 1887.

In the matter of a formal Investigation held at the Board-room of the Sunderland Board Offices, John Street, in the Borough of Sunderland, on the 28th and 29th days of October 1892, before WILLIAM WILSON and JAMES STOKOE, Esquires, two of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said Borough, assisted by Captains COSENS and RICHARDSON, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the British steamship "JANUS," on or near Haisborough Sand, on or about the 16th instant.

*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 through the master mistaking the lights, and taking no proper measures to verify his position. The Court finds the master, Henry Menham Dobson, in default for such stranding, and suspends his certificate for the space of six calendar months from the date hereof.

The Court recommends that he be granted a chief mate's certificate in the meantime.

Dated this 29th day of October 1892.

(Signed) WM. WILSON, }  
JAMES STOKOE, } Judge.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) WILLIAM COSENS, }  
GEO. RICHARDSON, } Assessors.

*Annex to the Report.*

The "Janus" is a British steamship, built of steel at Grangemouth, in the county of Stirling, in the year 1883, and registered at the port of Grangemouth, her official number being 81,135, and her dimensions as per register—length 240.5 ft., breadth 33.2 ft., and depth 14.1.2 ft. She is schooner-rigged, and fitted with two compound surface-condensing inverted direct-acting engines of 150 horse-power combined, the diameter of the cylinders being 30 and 54 inches, with a length of stroke of 36 inches, and her tonnage, after deducting 384.01 tons for propelling power and crew space, is 692.04 tons.

This vessel is owned by Mr. James Kish and others, Messrs. James Kish and Edward Kish, of Sunderland, being the managing owners, and she was under the command of Mr. Henry Menham Dobson, who holds a certificate of competency as master, numbered 95,116.

This vessel carried three compasses, namely, a pole compass on the bridge, a steering compass in the wheel-house, and one aft. These compasses are said to have been sluggish in fine weather, but there is nothing before the Court to show that they were not perfectly good and reliable compasses.

This vessel left Vockkro on the 13th day of October instant, with a crew of 18 hands all told, and having on board a cargo consisting of about 508 standards of deals and battens bound for Honfleur. She carried about 200 standards on deck, which are stated to have been about 13 ft. high forward and 11 ft. aft. Her draught of water on leaving Vockkro was 14 ft. forward and 16 ft. 4 in. aft, and the vessel was then well found and in good condition.

The vessel proceeded on her voyage, and at about 5.30 a.m. of Friday the 14th of October Hanstholmar Light bore S.E. by E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E. at an estimated distance of from 12 to 15 miles. Although this light had been in sight for some hours a four-point bearing was not taken, the master contenting himself by estimating the distance only. A course was then set S.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. magnetic, the engines going full speed, and the vessel making

about eight knots. This S.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. course appears to have been kept until noon of the following day (Saturday the 15th) when the course was altered by the master to S.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. About six o'clock the course was again altered to S.W. by W., and that course was kept until a light, which the master supposed was Smith's Knoll, was sighted on the port bow between eight and nine o'clock, and then the course was altered to south by the pole compass. There is, however, considerable conflict of evidence as to the exact courses steered, and as to the time of the alterations being made in the courses.

At 11.30 p.m. the second mate reported another light, which bore two points on the port bow. The master, who was then in the chart-room, came on deck and looked at it, and said he thought it was a fisherman's light. The second mate told the master he thought it was not a fisherman's light. The engines were then stopped, and a cast with the hand-lead was taken, but no bottom found with eighteen fathoms of line out (the reason the cast was taken with the hand-lead was that the deep-sea lead was below). The chief mate relieved the second mate shortly after midnight, and when he had been on the bridge about ten minutes, he went to the captain and told him that the light was still on the port bow, and that he did not think it was a fisherman's light. The captain said to him, "Yes it is; I have seen it. We have passed a lot of fishermen." There were several lights in sight at the time. The chief mate returned to the bridge, and about ten minutes afterwards saw something white ahead. He asked the man on the look-out if he could make out what it was, and he replied, "Broken water." At the same time the chief mate rang for the engines to be stopped and reversed, and he also knocked on the deck for the master, who came up immediately and ordered the helm hard-a-port; but before the headway was off the vessel she struck the sand and remained fast, the sea breaking over her. One of the life-boats and part of the deck cargo was washed away. The ship commenced to make water rapidly, and by 9 a.m. the water was up to the centre fires. The chief mate was sent away for assistance in the remaining life-boat. He spoke a passing steamer, which offered to stand by them, but could not render any other assistance.

In the meantime the Palling life-boat came on the scene and took the ship's life-boat in tow and went to the vessel and took off the remainder of the crew. The Palling life-boat continued in the neighbourhood for some time, but finding that nothing further could be done to save the ship on account of the high seas running, left and finally landed the crew at Yarmouth, no lives being lost.

It may be here remarked that the weather at this time and at and previous to sighting the first light was squally, with the wind blowing strong from the north-east and heavy rain showers.

The Court considers that the master did not exercise due care in fixing his departure from Hanstholmen, and when after steering across the North Sea on uncertain courses and making a light which he took for the Smith's Knoll, he did not take any steps to ascertain the position of his vessel, although the use of the lead and an intelligent observation of the character of the light would have at once shown him his error.

The light which the master said he thought was a fisherman's light was, no doubt, the Would Lightship light, and the ship stranded on Haisborough Sand.

At the conclusion of the evidence Mr. F. W. Dendy, the solicitor acting for the Board of Trade, desired the opinion of the Court on the following 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?

Ans.—The vessel had three compasses on board, viz., a pole compass, one in the wheel-house and one aft; they were in good order, and were 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?

Ans.—They were made by McGregor, of Glasgow, and were last adjusted by Mr. J. W. Plumb, of Sunderland, on the 28th August 1891.

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?

Ans.—The master did not ascertain the deviation of his compasses. He states to the Court that he had no opportunity of doing so. The corrections according to the deviation cards were applied.

4. Whether proper measures were taken at or about 5.30 a.m. of the 14th of October last to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel?

Ans.—Proper measures were not taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at this time.

5. Whether a proper course was then set and thereafter made good, and was due and proper allowance made for tide and currents?

Ans.—A proper course was then set but was not made good. No allowance was made for tide and currents.

6. Whether safe and proper alterations were subsequently made in the course, whether due and proper allowance was made for tide and currents, and were such altered courses made good?

Ans.—The alteration made in the course at noon on Saturday the 15th was not a proper one. No allowance was made for tide and currents.

7. Whether proper measures were taken from time to time after passing Hanstholmen, and especially at or about 9 p.m. of the 15th October, to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel?

Ans.—No measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel after passing Hanstholmen or at 9 p.m. of 15th October.

8. What was the light sighted at or about 9 p.m. of 15th October, and was the master justified in taking it for Smith's Knoll Light?

Ans.—The light sighted at 9 p.m. was the Lemna and Over Light. The master was not justified in taking it for Smith's Knoll Light.

9. What was the white flashing light subsequently observed ahead and on the port bow, and was the master justified in taking it to be a fisherman's light?

Ans.—The light which was taken for a white flashing light subsequently observed must have been the Would Lightship. The master was not justified in taking it for a fisherman's light.

10. Whether the master was on deck when the safety of the vessel required his personal supervision?

Ans.—No.

11. Whether the lead was used with sufficient frequency?

Ans.—It was not, and the hand lead was not the proper lead to use.

12. Whether a good and proper look-out was kept?

Ans.—Yes.

13. What was the cause of the casualty?

Ans.—The master mistaking the Lemna and Over for the Smith Knoll Light, and not having satisfied himself as to the position of the vessel.

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

Ans.—No.

15. Whether the master and officers are or either of them is in default?

Ans.—The master alone is in default.

(Signed) Wm. Wilson, }  
James Stokoe, } Justices.

We concur in the above.

(Signed) William Cosens,  
George Richardson.

“JOHN

FINDING and Order of the Court made at the British Consulate on the 26th, 27th and 28th of January 1892, and

- The Honorable J. Clifford Bawden, Captain in H.M. Service, Commander in Chief of the British Consulate at Valparaiso.
- ADOLPH FREDERICK, British Vice-Consul.
- JOHN STEWART, Master of the ship “Charles S. Pool, official pilot.
- JOSEPH LUCOCK, Master of the ship “Valparaiso, official number 1000.
- JOSEPH HALL, Esq., Clerk.

The Court, pursuant to the order of the Honorable Hedworth Lamont, proceeded to investigate the wreck of the British ship “John Bull,” on her voyage from Valparaiso to Liverpool, on the 14th of October, 1891, and to determine the cause of such wreck, and to report thereon to the Admiralty, and to the master, officers, and crew, and to the public, and to deliberately weighed the observations preferred by the master, officers, and crew of the

The Court finds;—

That the steamship “John Bull,” belonging to the port of Valparaiso about 4 p.m. of the 14th of October, 1891, laden with a general cargo, and bound for the port of Liverpool, on Sunday, January 19th, 1892, weather on Carranza, became a total wreck.

That the passengers of the “John Bull,” 11 a.m. on the day of the wreck.

That on passing Carranza, the departure was marked by a gun.

That the course steered was a wide berth to Carranza.

That no observation was made of any deviation.

That the caution relative to Carranza, American Pilot, Vol. 1, p. 118.

That the possibility of Carranza being a shoal was ignored, though known, vide p. 1,118 of the “Directory.”

That the master took no account of his experiences of Carranza, and of the above-mentioned caution.

That the master took no account of the weather on Carranza, and of the caution relative to Carranza.

That on rocks being sighted, the officer in charge, should immediately stop the vessel.

That after stranding on Carranza, the master, for a long time, did not attempt to get the vessel afloat, but instead of firstly attempting to get the vessel afloat, neither was any attempt made after water was reported