

(No. 4823.)

"DUNSTAFFNAGE."

FINDING and Order of a Naval Court held at the British Consulate-General at Monte Video on the 31st of October, and continued on the 2nd and 3rd of November, to investigate the circumstances connected with the fire which broke out on the 17th and again on the 19th of October on board the British barque "DUNSTAFFNAGE," official No. 80,949, of the port of Chatham, N.B., and further to enquire into the conduct of the master and crew on that occasion.

The "Dunstaffnage" is a barque of 850 tons register, built at Konchbongnac, N.B., 1882, and belonging to the port of Chatham, N.B.

It appears from the evidence given before this Court that she originally sailed from New York on the 5th day of May 1893, bound for Buenos Ayres, that nothing of importance occurred on the voyage, and she arrived at Buenos Ayres on July 24th and discharged her cargo. That she left Buenos Ayres bound to Callas, but put into Monte-Video on the 9th of October, her water tank leaking, and the master being ill. That nothing of importance occurred while in port until October 17th, at 10 p.m., when a fire broke out in the after cabin. This was put out, as was supposed, and on the 19th a survey was held on board to ascertain the damage done. On the afternoon of the 19th, at 3.30, signs of fire were seen still in the after-house, water was thrown over the parts smoking, and all signs of fire apparently extinguished. On the night of the 19th October the fire again broke out, doing great damage to the after part of the ship, and was not put out until several steam-tugs came and assisted with hoses. She was towed clear of the shipping by order of Captain of Port, having slipped her cable by his orders; and when the fire was extinguished, was towed into inner harbour and anchored in thirteen feet of water.

The Court, having regard to the circumstances above stated, finds as follows:—

1. That no blame is attached to the master, but it is the opinion of the Court that certain carelessness has been shown by him in allowing kerosene lamps to be used on board his ship without proper precautions, which may have been the cause of the fire, and that

some neglect has been shown by him in not having his force-pump in good working order.

2. That the Court is of opinion that the mate did his duty and acted promptly when the fire broke out.

3. That the crew appear to have conducted themselves properly, and used their utmost exertions to extinguish the fire.

4. That proper discipline appears to have been maintained on board the barque "Dunstaffnage."

5. That upon the evidence given, the vessel appears to have been well found, sufficiently manned, and seaworthy at the time of her departure from Buenos Ayres.

6. That the official log-book has been destroyed by the fire, but the ship's log-book has been saved, and also articles.

7. That the charts have all been destroyed by the fire, and also nautical instruments and ship's register.

8. That upon the evidence given, and the fact that on the afternoon of the 19th, at 3.30, there were still signs of fire remaining, as shown by the smoke seen issuing from the after-house of the ship, and this was also supposed to have been put out by throwing several buckets of water over it, it is clear that the fire was not thoroughly extinguished; also that this was the cause of the fire breaking out again on the night of the 19th at midnight.

The Court wishes to put on record that a survey was held on the morning of the 19th of October.

9. That, in accordance with the powers contained in section 263 of 17 & 18 Vict. c. 104, one half of the costs of the proceedings before the said Court be paid by James Faulkner, master of the barque "Dunstaffnage," one of the parties thereto; and he is hereby ordered to pay the said amount accordingly, viz., 19*l.* 3*s.* 0*d.*, and the other half by the Consul, and be charged in his account with the Board of Trade.

The expenses of this Court, fixed at 38*l.* 6*s.* 0*d.*, are approved.

Dated at Monte-Video, this third day of November 1893.

(Signed) ALFRED GRENFELL,
H.B.M.'s Acting Consul-
General and President
of the Naval Court.

EDW. COOPER, }
W. D. EVANS, } Members of
G. NIXON, } the Court.
JNO. COLLINS, }