

(No. 5231.)

“NEW BOROUGH” (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

In the matter of a formal Investigation held at the Municipal Buildings, West Hartlepool, on the 5th and 6th days of November 1895, before ROBINSON MURRAY and GEORGE STEEL, Esquires, Justices of the Peace for the Borough of West Hartlepool, assisted by Captains WILLIAM COSENS and WILLIAM BARNETT BIGLEY, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the British steamship “New Borough,” of West Hartlepool, on or near Washwood Beach, North Carolina, on or about the 17th day of April 1895.

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 neglecting to verify his position when off the Currituck Light at 8 p.m. of the 17th April last, and shaping his course on the assumption that he was sixteen miles off the said light, and by his having made no allowance for set off wind, sea, and current. The Court finds the master, David Jenkins, alone in default, and suspends his certificate, No. 05,637, for a period of six months, but recommends that he be granted a mate's certificate during the period of such suspension. The Court considers that the second officer, Robert Garbutt, is deserving of severe censure for not taking an intelligent interest in the navigation of the vessel.

Dated this seventh day of November 1895.

(Signed) R. MURRAY, } Justices.  
GEORGE STEEL, }

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) WILLIAM COSENS, } Assessors.  
WM. BARNETT BIGLEY, }

Annex to the Report.

This inquiry was held in the Municipal Buildings, West Hartlepool, on the 5th and 6th days of November 1895, before Robinson Murray and George Steel, Esquires, two of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the Borough of West Hartlepool, assisted by Captains Cosens and Bigley, Nautical Assessors.

Mr. W. Spelman Burton appeared on behalf of the Board of Trade, and Mr. T. K. Tilly on behalf of the owners and master. The second mate, Robert Garbutt, was a party to the inquiry, but was not professionally represented.

The s.s. “New Borough,” official number 95,878, is a screw steamer, built at West Hartlepool in 1888, by William Gray and Company, her length being 260.4 ft., breadth 36.7 ft., and depth of hold 18.2 ft. She is schooner rigged and fitted with triple expansion inverted direct-acting engines of 150 horses power combined, her gross tonnage being 1795.03 and her nett register tonnage 1169.48. She is owned by Sir Christopher Furness and others, Sir Christopher Furness being designated managing owner. On the voyage in question she was under the command of Mr. David Jenkins, who held a certificate of competency as master, No. 05,637, and she had a crew of 22 hands all told. Mr. Jenkins joined the vessel only a few hours before she left Cardiff on her outward voyage, the previous master being detained through illness. The charts and deviation records were handed over to Mr. Jenkins.

In the course of her voyage the “New Borough,” at Tampa, loaded a cargo of about 2,300 tons of phosphate rock for Stettein, intending to call at Newport News for bunker coal, and was drawing about 17 feet. She sailed on the 11th of April with same number of crew and one stowaway. All appears to have gone well, and

at midnight of April the 16th the captain thought he saw Cape Hatteras Light, and obtained soundings in 22 fathoms. From this time the lead was kept going at intervals, the wind being north-easterly, fresh and increasing, with squally and overcast weather, rendering celestial observations impossible. At 8 p.m. of the 17th of April, the weather being still overcast and squally, with a fresh north-east wind, a light was seen about two points before the beam, whereupon the master, thinking it was Currituck Light, stood in for it, and upon making out the red flash was confirmed in this opinion. Two casts of the lead were then taken, giving, it is said, 17 and 16 fathoms respectively. A course N.W. by N.  $\frac{1}{4}$  N. was then set by the pole compass, on which there was no deviation. About 8.30 p.m. the master went below, leaving the second mate in charge, with instructions to keep a good look-out, and to call him if necessary, and in any case at midnight. No attempt was made to estimate the vessel's distance from the light other than the single bearing and casts of the lead, by which the master concluded he was 16 miles off shore. The Currituck Light remained visible from 8 p.m. up till time of stranding, and had the master taken occasional bearings he would at once have seen the error of his assumed position, and that the vessel was very much nearer the land, for it is obvious that no current could have set the vessel so far out of her course as the position in which she stranded. From 8 p.m. the “New Borough” was kept at half speed, three to four knots per hour, with the view of reaching the entrance to the Chesapeake at daylight. At about 10.30 p.m. the vessel was taking considerable water on board, and the bight of the lead-line, which had been coiled on No. 2 hatch, was washed overboard. The second mate thereupon sent the look-out man off the bridge to assist in hauling it in. During this operation the master, hearing a noise, came out of the chart-room and was met at the door by the second mate, who informed him that he thought he saw something to leeward, and that he had ordered the helm hard-a-port. The captain upon reaching the bridge perceived breakers close to on the port bow. He immediately stopped and reversed the engines, and the vessel's head swinging out to the N.E., the engines were thereupon stopped and put full speed ahead. She however soon struck amidships, and bumping once or twice, her keel hanging, she lost steerage way, and her head swang round to the westward. Efforts to get her off by means of her engines were continued until midnight, but without avail. Signals of distress were then made and shortly replied to from the life-saving station on shore. At daylight communication between the shore and the vessel, by means of the rocket apparatus, was established, and by 11 a.m. of the 18th the crew and stowaway were all safely landed, the captain being the last to leave the vessel. No lives were lost. It was then discovered that the ship was on a shoal off Washwood, between False Cape and Sheep House Hill, about 11 miles to the northward of Currituck Light. The vessel was eventually floated on the 5th of May and taken to Norfolk, Virginia, where she still remains, having sustained very considerable and serious damage.

On the opening of the enquiry Mr. Burton put in a list of questions, and on the conclusion of the evidence, having made a slight addition to such list, submitted the same as follows, for the consideration of the Court:—

1. What number of compasses had the vessel, were they in good order, and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel, and when and by whom were they last adjusted?
2. Did the master ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observation from time to time, were the errors correctly ascertained, and the proper corrections to the courses applied?
3. Whether proper measures were taken at or about 8 p.m. of the 17th April last to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel? Whether a safe and proper course was set and thereafter steered, and whether due and proper allowance was made for tide and currents?
4. Was the course altered after 8 p.m. of the 17th April? If so, was the alteration then made a safe and proper one, and was due and proper allowance made for tide and currents?

5. What was the light reported at or about 9.15 p.m. of the 17th April?

6. Whether the second officer was justified in calling the look-out man from his post at about 10.50 p.m. of the 17th April?

7. Whether the lead was used with sufficient frequency?

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

9. Whether the vessel was provided with proper and sufficient charts and sailing directions?

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

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

Mr. Tilly, on behalf of the master and owners, addressed the Court. The second officer did not desire to say anything. Mr. Burton having replied on behalf of the Board of Trade, the Court replied to the questions as follows:—

1. The vessel was provided with three compasses, viz., a pole compass, by which the courses were set and steered; one on the upper bridge, and one aft. They were in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel. There was no evidence when or by whom they were last adjusted.

2. The master stated that he did ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observation from time to time. The errors appear to have been correctly ascertained and the proper corrections to the courses applied.

3. Proper measures were not taken at or about 8 p.m. of the 17th April last to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel. Had the master been in the position he stated he was, the course set and steered would have been safe and proper. No allowance was made for tide and currents.

4. At about 8.10 p.m. of the 17th April last, the course was altered from N.W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  N. to N.W. by N.  $\frac{1}{4}$  N. This alteration was safe and proper if the vessel had been in the position stated by the master. No allowance was made for tide and currents.

5. From the position at which the vessel was stranded the Court is of opinion that the light reported at or about 9.15 p.m. of the 17th April last was one in the vicinity of the Currituck Inlet life-saving station.

6. The second officer was not justified in calling the look-out man from his post at or about 10.50 p.m. of the 17th April last.

7. Up to 8 p.m. of the 17th April last the lead was used with sufficient frequency, but not thereafter.

8. A good and proper look-out was not kept.

9. From the evidence the Court is unable to say whether the vessel was provided with proper and sufficient charts and sailing directions.

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

11. The Court finds the master, David Jenkins, alone in default, and suspends his certificate, No. 05,637, for a period of six months, but recommends that he be granted a mate's certificate during the period of such suspension. The Court, however, considers that the second officer, Robert Garbutt, is deserving of severe censure for not taking an intelligent interest in the navigation of the vessel.

(Signed) R. MURRAY,  
GEORGE STEEL, } Justices.

We concur.

(Signed) WILLIAM COSENS,  
WM. BARNETT BIGLEY, } Assessors.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the  
21st day of November 1895.)

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We concur in the  
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