

(No. 5483.)

"ANGLOMAN" (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

IN the matter of a formal Investigation held at the Magistrates Room, Liverpool, on the 23rd 24th, and 25th days of February 1897, before W. J. STEWART, Esquire, assisted by Captain A. Wood and Captain S. Brooks, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the British S.S. "ANGLOMAN," of Liverpool, on the West Platter Rocks, Skerries, Anglesea.

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 and material damage sustained by the said vessel were occasioned by her running on the West Platter Rocks in a fog, her master not hearing the syren on the Skerries, assuming that his vessel was at a safe distance from them.

Dated this 25th day of February 1897.

(Signed) W. J. STEWART, Judge.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) A. Wood, } Assessors.
SAMUEL BROOKS, }

Annex to the Report.

The "Angloman," official number 99,393, is a British screw steamer of the Port of Liverpool. She was built of steel by Messrs. Laird Brothers at Birkenhead in 1892. She was 403.5 ft. long, 45.6 ft. broad, and 32.5 ft. deep. Her amended registered tonnage was 3035.71 tons. She was propelled by three inverted direct-acting triple expansion engines of 600 horsepower combined. She was owned by the British and North Atlantic Steam Navigation Company, Limited, of Liverpool, in the county of Lancaster, and Mr. David Richards, of 18, James Street, Liverpool, is designated in the transcript of register as the manager.

The "Angloman" left Boston, United States, for Liverpool on the 30th January 1897, with a general cargo of about 6000 tons, and also a large number of cattle, horses, and sheep. Her crew consisted of 56 hands and 28 cattlemen. She was commanded by Mr. Edward Lewis, who holds a certificate of competency numbered 22,809. She was in good order and condition, and well found in every respect. The weather was foggy on approaching the Channel, and no lights were seen on the Irish coast. Bardsey Light was sighted at about 4 a.m. on the 9th February, and at 5.45 a.m. of the same date the vessel's position was ascertained by a four-point bearing to be west 4½ miles distant from Carnarvon Bay lightship. A course was then set N. by E. magnetic, and the engines were kept going full-speed. At 6 a.m. the fog became dense, and the speed of the vessel was reduced to about 8½ knots. At 6.48 a sounding was taken by Sir William Thomson's patent sounding machine, which gave a depth of 23 fathoms. At 7 a.m. the course was altered to N.N.E. magnetic, which course was steered till 7.25, when it was changed to N.E. ¾ N. magnetic, and at 7.35 a further change was made to N.E. ½ E. magnetic. At 7.42 a second cast of the lead was taken, which showed the depth of water to be 34 fathoms. From this sounding the master assumed the vessel to be in Holyhead deep, the patent log indicating at this time that the vessel had run 17 miles since Carnarvon Bay light-vessel was abeam. At 7.45 the gun on the North Stack was heard abaft the starboard beam, and by the faintness of the sound the master judged the North Stack to be a long way off. By 8 a.m. the distance run from Carnarvon lightship, by the patent log,

was 20 miles, the weather still being thick with a moderate breeze from the S.W. Shortly after 8 o'clock a steamer was heard on the port bow making the usual fog signal with her steam whistle. At 8.10 a.m., as the fog signal was not heard from the Skerries, the course was altered to N.E. by E. magnetic, the master being himself on the bridge, and a look-out, John Pritchard, A.B., on the fore-castle head, the speed of the vessel at this time being between eight and nine knots. At 8.25 a.m. the man on the look-out forward saw breakers ahead about 20 yards distant, but said that before he could report them the ship was ashore. The master himself had seen the breakers from the bridge, and telegraphed to the engine-room "full speed astern." The helm was also put hard a-port, but before either of these measures had time to take effect the vessel stranded on the West Platters within a few hundred yards of the lighthouse on the Skerries. Rockets were then sent up, and the steam whistle sounded, after which the syren from the Skerries was heard for the first time. It was found the vessel had run ashore about low water. Within an hour there was 27 feet of water in holds numbered 1, 2, and 3, and 10 feet in No. 4 hold. H.M.S. "Reynard," the tug "Jane Joliffe," and three lifeboats came off to render assistance. During the day the "Angloman" canted round with her stern to the lighthouse, and fell over on her port side. Some cargo and live stock has since been saved. At 4 p.m. the master and chief officer left the ship, the crew having left previously. It did not transpire in court whether the crew saved their effects or not. No log-book or documents relating to the navigation of the vessel were produced, and it may here be stated that the soundings, courses, and distances given in evidence by the master were noted down by him from memory the day after he landed, and therefore the Court has some doubt as to their entire accuracy. Justin Sibert, keeper of the lighthouse on the Skerries, was produced in court, and stated that the syren on the Skerries was sounded from 7.30 a.m. till 11.15 a.m. on the 9th February. Three witnesses were produced on the master's behalf who are members of the lifeboat's crew at Camlyn Bay, and are farmers residing in the vicinity of Carmel Point. All three stated that they can hear the syren from the Skerries quite distinctly at their houses; that on the morning in question it was a dense fog when they arose—Ishmael John Jones at 6 a.m., Owen Jones at 6.20 a.m., and John Williams at 7 a.m. At about 8 a.m. they heard two steamers off shore, in the direction of the Skerries, blowing their whistles, but that, though it was a dense fog at the time, they heard no sound from the syren on the Skerries until 8.30 a.m., when it made a special signal, which they understood to mean that a ship was in distress, and in accordance with this signal they manned the lifeboat and proceeded to the Skerries, where they found the "Angloman" ashore. John Williams further stated that he heard the gun on the North Stack during the morning while the syren on the Skerries was silent.

At the conclusion of the evidence, the following questions were submitted on behalf of the Board of Trade for the opinion 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. Were proper measures taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at 5.45 a.m. on the 9th February, and from time to time thereafter?
4. Whether at or about 6 a.m. on the last-mentioned date and thereafter the weather was thick with fog, and, if so, whether the speed of the vessel was reduced?
5. Whether at 7 a.m., and again at 8.10 a.m. on the last-mentioned date, safe and proper alterations were made in the course, and was due and proper allowance made for tide and currents?
6. Was the lead used with sufficient frequency and with due care, and were accurate soundings obtained?
7. Was a good and proper look-out kept?

8. Was the syren at the Skerries duly sounded at and after 7.30 a.m. on the 9th February, and if so, was it heard by the master and officers of the "Angloman"? If the syren was duly sounded, why was it not heard by those on board the vessel?

9. Was the vessel navigated with proper and seaman-like care?

10. What was the cause of the stranding of the vessel?

11. Whether the stranding and loss of the "Angloman" was caused by the wrongful act or default of the master, chief officer, and third officer, or of either of them?

The Court, having heard Mr. Miller on behalf of the master and chief officer, and Mr. Paxton in reply for the Board of Trade, gave judgment as above and returned the following answers to the questions of the Board of Trade:—

1. The vessel had four compasses, two Sir William Thomson's, one of which was placed on the roof of the wheel-house, and the other within the wheel-house. One spirit-compass on the lower bridge, and an ordinary compass in the after wheel-house. They were in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel, and were last adjusted by Messrs. John Bruce & Sons, of Liverpool, on the 11th June 1896.

2. The master ascertained the deviation of his compasses from time to time, the errors were correctly ascertained, and the proper corrections seem to have been applied to the courses.

3. Proper measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel. At 5.45 a.m. of the 9th February the position of the vessel was found, by a four-point bearing, to be West $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant from Carnarvon Bay Light Vessel. At 6.48 a.m. a sounding of 23 fathoms was obtained. At 7.42 another cast was taken, which gave 34 fathoms, and at the moment of stranding another sounding was being taken. About 7.40 the sound of the gun on the North Stack was heard and noted to be abaft the starboard beam, and the syren on the Skerries was listened for but was not heard.

4. At 6 a.m. on the last-mentioned date the weather was thick with fog. The speed of the vessel was somewhat reduced, but in the opinion of the Court not sufficiently.

5. From the positions the master seems justified in assuming his vessel to have been in at 7 a.m., and at 8.10 a.m. on the last-mentioned date safe and proper alterations were made in the courses. No allowance

was made on these courses for tide and current as the little ebb tide then running was meeting the vessel end on.

6. The lead was not used with sufficient frequency. The discrepancy between the courses assumed to have been made, and the distances run and the positions obtained by soundings at 6.48 a.m. and 7.42 a.m. should have indicated to the master that something was going wrong, and he should have kept the lead going. These two soundings seem to have been taken with due care, and the Court has no reason to believe they were inaccurate.

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

8. The keeper of the lighthouse on the Skerries, who was produced in Court, stated that he sounded the syren at and after 7.30 a.m. on the 9th February until 11.15 a.m. Three farmers, members of the lifeboat crew, who live in the vicinity of Carmel Point, stated that they can hear the syren quite distinctly when sounded—that on the morning in question after 6 a.m. it was a dense fog, and although they heard steamers' whistles sounding in the offing no sound was heard from the syren till about 8.30, when a special signal was sounded from the syren, which was heard quite loudly, indicating that a vessel was in distress on the Skerries. No one on board the "Angloman" appears to have heard any sound signal from the Skerries until after that vessel stranded within a quarter of a mile of the lighthouse. If the syren had been duly sounded the Court is unable to understand why those on board the "Angloman" failed to hear it.

9. The vessel was navigated with proper and seaman-like care, except that the Court is of opinion that the speed of the vessel should have been still further reduced, and the lead more frequently used.

10. The stranding was due to the fact that the master, not hearing the syren on the Skerries, assumed that he was a safe distance from them.

11. The stranding of and material damage to the "Angloman" were not due to the default of the master, chief officer, or third officer.

(Signed) W. J. STEWART, Judge.

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) A. WOOD,
SAMUEL BROOKS, } Assessors.

Liverpool, 25th February 1897.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 11th day of March 1897.)

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