

(No. 5533.)

“TREVOSE” (S.S.)

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

IN the matter of a formal Investigation held at the Guildhall, Penzance, on the 5th and 6th days of May 1897, before ROBT. H. PRESTON and WILLIAM HARVEY JULYAN, Esquires, Justices of the Peace, assisted by Captains J. S. CASTLE and E. M. HUGHES, into the circumstances attending the damage sustained by the British steamer “TREVOSE,” of St. Ives, through striking on or near the Farilhoes Rock, Portugal, on or about the 21st March 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 and damage sustained was caused by the ship not having made her course good, and the thick weather, which prevented the Burling Light being seen.

Dated this 12th day of May 1897.

(Signed) ROBT. H. PRESTON, } Justices of the Peace for the Borough of Penzance.  
W. H. JULYAN, }

We concur in the above report.

(Signed) JOHN S. CASTLE, } Assessors.  
E. M. HUGHES, }

Annex to the Report.

This inquiry was heard at the Guildhall, Penzance, on the above-mentioned dates, when Mr. G. L. Bodilly (solicitor) represented the Board of Trade, Mr. T. F. D. Miller (barrister-at-law) appeared for the owners and officers, and Mr. E. Boase appeared for the master.

The “Trevose,” official number 104,673, is a British steamship, built of steel in 1896 by Messrs. John Readhead & Sons, of South Shields, and is registered at St. Ives, of the following dimensions:—Length 323.5 ft., breadth 47.1 ft., and depth 25.93 ft. Her tonnage being 3111.56 tons gross, and 1994.82 net register tonnage.

She is schooner-rigged and fitted with three triple expansion direct-acting inverted engines of 300 nominal horse power combined, and is owned by Mr. Edward Hain, junior, of St. Ives, in the county of Cornwall, steamship owner, he being designated managing owner. Advice dated 20th April 1896.

This vessel left Cardiff on the 16th March last, bound for Port Said, with a cargo of 4300 tons of coal, under the command of Mr. William Beckerleg, who holds a certificate of competency as master, No. 31,770, and had a crew of 25 hands all told. Her draft of water at the time of sailing was 20 ft. 4½ ins. forward and aft.

She was, when leaving Cardiff, in a good and seaworthy condition, and properly equipped for the intended voyage. She had three boats, two of which were lifeboats, and was supplied with the life-saving appliances in accordance with the Statute. There were three compasses, viz., a standard compass on the upper bridge, by which the vessel was navigated and the courses steered; one on the lower bridge, and one aft. They were last adjusted in April 1896 by Messrs. Gillies, of South Shields. The deviation cards were not produced, but the master informed the Court that the deviation had materially changed, and that the production of the above-mentioned cards would have been no assistance to the Court.

Nothing of any importance took place until 6.45 a.m. of the 20th March; the vessel then passed Cape Finisterre, bearing E.S.E., distance eight miles. This distance having been ascertained by a four-point bearing taken by the chief officer, a course was then set S. by W. by the standard compass; on this course there was one point of easterly deviation, thus making a

S.S.W. course magnetic, the engines going at full speed and making 8½ knots. At 9 a.m. observations were taken for the chronometer, and the compass at the same time showing the deviation already mentioned to be correct.

This course was continued until 4 a.m. of the 21st, the weather during that interval being fine and clear, with light variable winds, and no sea to speak of.

At 4 a.m. a slight haze was observed by the chief officer, who then altered the course to S. by W. ½ W. by compass, or S.W. by S. ½ S. magnetic, and he was then relieved by the second officer. At 4.30 a.m. the vessel ran into a fog bank; the second officer at once gave orders to the engineer to reduce the pressure of steam, and at the same time, or very shortly afterwards, he called the master, who, on coming on deck, found that the vessel was in a dense fog. He then gave orders for the speed of the engines to be reduced, and changed the course to S.W. by S. ½ S. by compass, or S.W. ½ S. magnetic.

At 5 a.m. the patent log indicated 188 miles from Cape Finisterre, from which 8 miles was deducted, for error.

At this time the engines were working dead slow, her speed being from 3½ to 4 knots. The syren was kept sounded, and at about 6.15 a.m. an echo from the syren was heard nearly ahead. The helm was immediately put hard to port, and shortly after the man on the look-out reported breakers ahead, the engines were reversed full speed and the vessel struck on some rocks, glided off, then striking on her port quarter. The wells were then sounded, and it was found that No. 1 ballast tank had filled, also that water was in the after-ballast tank and limbers, which was rapidly increasing. All pumps connected with the engine-room were set to work, also two pumps on deck were worked by the crew; but notwithstanding this, the water rapidly increased.

The engines were driven at full speed to enable them to reach the River Tagus before the vessel became in a sinking condition. The boats were then ordered to be got ready, and they were swung out and provisioned.

A course was set for the coast, and on passing Peniche they heard the fog sound from that station, and then steered for Cape Rocco, where they arrived at 1 p.m. At the Cascaes Bay they took on board a pilot, and proceeded at full speed, passing the Quarantine Station without stopping, with signals flying indicating the vessel in a sinking condition.

The vessel was then beached about two miles from Lisbon on the south side of the River Tagus. The cargo was discharged, and temporary repairs were made. On the 7th of April the vessel left Lisbon bound for the Tyne, arriving there on the 12th. She was then docked and found to be very materially damaged, the estimate cost of the repairs, as stated by the owners, being 3,000l.

At the conclusion of the evidence Mr. Bodilly submitted the following questions 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 course applied?
- 3. Whether proper measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about 6.45 a.m. of the 20th March last?
- 4. Whether safe and proper courses were set and steered at and 6.45 a.m. of the 20th March last, and whether due and proper allowance was made for tide and currents?
- 5. Whether, having regard to the thick state of the weather after 5 a.m. of the 21st March last, the vessel was navigated at too great a rate of speed?
- 6. Whether the lead was used before the casualty, and, if not, whether it should have been used?
- 7. Whether a good and proper look-out was kept?
- 8. What was the cause of the casualty?
- 9. Whether the vessel was navigated with proper and seamanlike care?
- 10. Whether the material damage sustained by the

s.s. "Trevoze" was caused by the wrongful act or default of the master, and chief and second officers, or either of them?

Mr. T. F. Miller then addressed the Court on behalf of his clients and Mr. Boase on behalf of the master, Mr. Bodilly replied for the Board of Trade, and the Court gave judgment as follows:—

Answers.

1. The vessel was furnished with three compasses, standard compass on the upper bridge by which the courses were set and steered, one in the wheelhouse, and one aft; they were in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel. Adjusted in April 1896 by Messrs. Gillies of South Shields.

2. The master has stated that he did take observations whenever opportunity occurred, the last one being on the 20th of March, off Cape Finisterre, on a S.S.W. course, the errors were correctly ascertained, and the proper corrections to the courses applied.

3. Proper measures were taken to ascertain the position of the vessel at or about 6.45 a.m. on the 20th of March last.

4. Safe and proper courses were set, if made good, at or after 6.45 a.m. on the 20th March last. The Court

is of opinion that sufficient allowance was not made for currents.

5. The vessel was not navigated at too great a speed after 5 a.m. on the 21st March last.

6. The lead was not used, and the Court is of opinion that it would have been of no service in the locality in which the vessel then was.

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

8. Ship not having made the course good, and the thick weather which prevented the Burling Light being seen.

9. The vessel appears to have been navigated with proper seamanlike care.

10. The material damage sustained to the s.s. "Trevoze" was not caused by the wrongful act or default of the master, and chief and second officers.

(Signed) ROBT. H. PRESTON, }  
W. H. JULYAN, } Justices.

We concur.

(Signed) JOHN S. CASTLE, }  
E. M. HUGHES, } Assessors.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 27th day of May 1897.)

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