

(No. 5575.)

“ALAGONIA” (s.s.)

Inquiry 28 V. 2 and 51 V. 6.

MINUTES of a preliminary Court of Inquiry held at the Court House, Albany, on Wednesday, June 2nd 1897, before EDWARD SCOBLE POMEROY TROODE, Acting Principal Officer of Customs, Albany, W. A., and PETER HAY NICOLSEN, J.P., Master Mariner, under the provisions of the Local Ordinance 28 Vic. No. 2, and 51 Vic. No. 6, to inquire into the circumstances attending the casualty to the British steamship “ALAGONIA,” of Melbourne, of 1,728 tons, while on a voyage from Albany to Newcastle, N.S.W., in ballast.

David Davies, master of the “Alagonia,” whose certificate of competency is numbered 06,779, states the port of registry of the “Alagonia” is Melbourne; her official number is 102,199, classed A1 at Lloyd’s. We left the wharf at 5.30 p.m. on 26th May last, and proceeded to sea, passing Breaksea light at 6.30 p.m. Steered course E. by S. ¼ S. At 7.30 p.m. Breaksea light was bearing W.N.W., distance 9 miles. The wind was E.N.E., fresh; sea moderate. Being myself on the bridge, heard a shock like a thud, followed immediately by the engines going round at a terrific speed until the steam was shut off, which was done in about two minutes. We then went round to try and find out what was the matter. We hung a light over the stern, and found the propeller hard up against the rudder post, and half of one propeller blade broken off. Set canvas on the ship; she was heading to south. Finding she was drifting rapidly to the south-west, I ordered the anchor to be let go; sounded, and found 45 fathoms water, dropped the anchor, and veered out 110 fathoms chain, which held the ship and brought her head to the wind.

While this was being done we signalled Breaksea lighthouse by means of rockets. At 11.30 p.m. the tug boat “Dunskey” came off, we hove up the anchor, and she towed us into Princess Royal harbour, arriving about 4.30 a.m. On examination we found the shaft was broken. There was no appearance of wreckage at the time of the casualty, and the position of the ship was free of all danger according to the chart.

(Signed) DAVID DAVIES, Master.

Statement of Thomas Williams, chief officer:—I am chief officer of s.s. “Alagonia.” I was on the bridge at the time of casualty, and having now heard the captain’s statement, I confirm it as correct. Having heard the thud, I am of opinion that the blade of the screw had struck something, and caused the blade to get broken.

(Signed) THOMAS WILLIAMS,  
Chief Officer.

Statement of Thomas Glass, chief engineer, certificate of competency No. 25,390, states that the machinery was working satisfactorily up to the time of the casualty; there was a sharp report, immediately followed by the engines running away. I shut the steam off, and on examination found the tail end shaft broken, also half of one of the blades. The shaft was, as far as I know, perfectly sound before the accident.

I am of opinion the accident was caused by some obstruction breaking both shaft and propeller blade.

(Signed) THOMAS GLASS,  
Chief Engineer.

*Finding.*

After careful consideration we are of opinion that no blame can be attached to the certificated master and mate of the steamer “Alagonia,” and by virtue of the powers vested in us by Sec. 2 of 51 Vic. No. 6, subsection C, we direct that all proceedings shall cease and determine.

(Signed) E. S. P. TROODE,  
Acting Principal Officer of Customs

(Signed) PETER HAY NICHOLSEN,  
Master Mariner.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the  
12th day of August 1897.)