

(No. 5678.)

"BEAUTIFUL STAR" (S.S.).

Shipping and Seamen's Act, 1877.
Wrecks and Casualties.Colony of } REPORT on a Shipping Casualty to the
New Zealand. } "BEAUTIFUL STAR."
to wit.To the Honourable the Minister having charge of the
Marine Department of New Zealand.

I, the undersigned, Stipendiary Magistrate, having been, on the 3rd day of December, 1897, applied to by Dugald McKellar, Esquire, Collector of Customs at the Port of Wellington, for a formal investigation, pursuant to section 240 of "The Shipping and Seamen's Act, 1877," and other provisions of the said Act, respecting a shipping casualty to a certain British ship, called the "Beautiful Star," of the Port of Dunedin, on the 26th day of November last, in the vicinity of two or three miles south of Waitahona East Coast, N. I., New Zealand, did duly proceed with the said investigation, to wit, on the 4th day of December instant, and had before me, and examined on oath, divers persons and witnesses, to wit, James Campbell, master of s.s. "Beautiful Star"; Robert Johnston, engineer; Frederick Melhuish Dicker, master; Frederick Laver, acting second officer s.s. "Beautiful Star"; George Manson Galland, A.B.; and Oscar Anderson, A.B.; the original depositions of whose evidence are hereunto annexed, signed by me, being assisted therein by J. A. H. Marciel, holding a certificate of competency, No. 03758, from the Board of Trade, and W. G. North, holding a certificate of competency, No. 238, from the Marine Department, New Zealand, who were duly appointed by the Minister of Marine to act as Assessors; and, upon such investigation and examination of witnesses as aforesaid, I find and report as follows, that is to say:—

1. That the official number of said ship, called the "Beautiful Star," is 43,602, of which James Campbell is master, who holds a certificate of service, No. 2039, issued by the Marine Department, New Zealand, and which ship belonged to the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand, Limited, of Dunedin.

2. That the loss or damage herein more particularly mentioned happened on the 26th day of November, 1897, at about 1.20 o'clock in the forenoon, off the Aohanga River.

3. That the loss or damage appears by the evidence to have been caused by striking on a rock off the Aohanga River.

4. That there was no evidence that the vessel was insured in any company. That the "Beautiful Star" is schooner-rigged. Her port of registry, Dunedin. Her registered tonnage, 146. That no lives were lost through the casualty.

And I, the said Stipendiary Magistrate, further state my opinion on the matter aforesaid to be as follows:—

That, up to the time of the second mate taking charge, there was nothing out of the ordinary course in the navigation of the vessel, and that she was at that time in a safe position.

That at the time of the vessel striking she was in charge of the second mate, an inexperienced man, whose want of knowledge of the coast prevented his taking the necessary precautions to secure the safety of the ship after he had taken her too close to the land.

The second mate, not being a certificated officer, is not under the control of this Court. I desire to condemn the system, which has been acquiesced in by the shipping authorities, of placing on the articles as second mate of small steamers men who have no title to such a position, and who, in consequence of such position, by the custom of the coastal trade take their watch alternately with certificated officers. The Court believes this to be a bad system, and one which should be discontinued.

I think the captain must be held blameable for having placed the ship in charge of a man whose previous experience of the coast he knew was very limited, and on that ground order him to pay the costs of this inquiry, amounting to seven guineas.

The certificates of the officers will be returned to them.

Given under my hand, this fourth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven, at Wellington, New Zealand.

(Signed) H. S. WARDELL,
Stipendiary Magistrate.

I concur in the above report.

(Signed) J. A. H. MARCIEL, Assessor.

I concur in the above report.

(Signed) W. NORTH, Assessor.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the
10th day of March, 1898.)