

d by the
Adelaide"
beyond the
recovered,
passengers
propose to
Court of
of com-

Y,
Board.

on the

(No. 5782.)

"JACOB BRIGHT" (S.S.).

BAHAMA ISLANDS, NEW PROVIDENCE.

AT a Court of Enquiry held at the Police Office, in the Island of New Providence, on the 24th and 25th days of August, 1898, before ROBERT STEWART JOHNSTONE, Esquire, Stipendiary and Circuit Magistrate in and for the Bahamas Islands, and one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said Islands, and FREDERICK J. LOBB, Commander, R.N., sitting as Nautical Assessor. In the matter of the stranding of the British steamship "JACOB BRIGHT," Frank Mills, Master, on the 16th day of August, 1898, on the West end of Egg Island Reef, Bahamas.

Report.

The British steamer, "Jacob Bright," classed 100, A 1 at Lloyd's, 1,734 tons register, 220 horse-power, of the port of Manchester, was built of steel at West Hartlepool, in 1896. She is owned by W. Leatham Bright, of London, and was insured. She sailed from New York on the 11th instant, for Bluefields, Nicaragua, in water ballast, but was compelled to call at Nassau, owing to her steward having had an epileptic fit. She arrived at Nassau on the morning of the 16th instant, and sailed on the same afternoon for her destination. At 3.25 p.m. her course was set N.E. by N. to get round Egg Island. At 5 p.m., when the patent log showed 15 miles, this course was altered to N.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E. At 5.45 p.m., patent log showing 22 miles, the course was altered to N.E. At 6.50 p.m. Egg Island light was abeam, bearing by compass S.E., and the distance from it was estimated at $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles—patent log showing 34 miles. Course was then altered to N.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. A few minutes later the steamer brought up on Egg Island reef. Egg Island light was said by the master to bear S.E. $\frac{3}{4}$ S., and to be distant $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles good. Engines were put full speed astern, and Nos. 2 and 3 tanks pumped out, but without effect. Her draught on leaving Nassau was 8 ft. 4 in. forward and 11 ft. aft. Over-side soundings gave 5 fathoms, amidship's 12 ft., from bilge to fore part of No. 2 hatch 8 ft., and forward 12 ft.—the steamer hanging between bilge and forepart of No. 2 hatch. At 9.15 p.m. engines were put half speed ahead to slew the ship but she did not move, and at 9.25 p.m. they were put full speed astern again. At 10 p.m., as the water was falling further, attempts ceased for this night—the ship heading N.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. The next morning a kedge was run out astern and the engines were again put full speed astern, but without success. During the day boats came from the shore, but they refused to take a letter to Nassau unless the master gave up his vessel to them as "wreckers." Further efforts were made to get the steamer off on the next rise of tide, but without any better success. The following day these were continued. The master fortunately succeeded in getting a small boat to take a letter to Lloyd's agent at Nassau, which resulted in the steamer "Antilia," of that port, arriving

at Egg Island reef at 2.30 p.m. on 19th instant. During the interval the efforts to get the steamer off had been repeated at each high tide. The same evening the "Antilia" tried to tow her off by a cable attached to the mainmast, but failure again attended their efforts. The following day the coal was shifted and another attempt was made, with no better success. On 21st instant the crew commenced discharging the steamer's bunker coal into schooners which came alongside, and this went on the following day, while further attempts to tow the vessel off failed.

After several of these attempts the steamer was got off on the 23rd instant by the "Antilia," with the aid of her own engines, and came back to Nassau. It was most fortunate that the sea was calm and the weather good all through the operations, or the result might have been very different.

The master states that he has been inside the water ballast tanks about the place where the steamer grounded and that he can see no signs of plates being bulged or cracked.

Opinion.

We are of opinion that (1) the courses steered from the time of leaving the anchorage off Nassau bar were not safe and proper ones, the ship's reckoning, when worked up, placing her as nearly as possible where she actually struck, *i.e.*, the west end of Egg Island reef, at rather less than $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles N.W. $\frac{3}{4}$ N. from Egg Island lighthouse.

(2) We are also of opinion that when the "Jacob Bright" left New York for Bluefields, calling at Inagua, the master provided himself with the necessary large scale charts for the voyage, but when he decided to put into Nassau, to land steward who was suffering from epileptic fits, he had no chart taking in the Providence Channel, &c., except the small scale general chart "West India Islands and Caribbean Sea, Sheet I." This chart misled the master, inasmuch as it does not show the reef off Egg Island.

(3) The hand lead, though of no practical use in this instance, should have been used in accordance with the ordinary practice when near land.

(4) In conclusion, the Court is of opinion that the master was guilty of an error of judgment in shaping course to pass so near Egg Island, but taking into consideration the fact of his being, through unforeseen circumstances, unprovided with proper charts of the locality, and also the zeal and seamanlike ability displayed by him after the ship took the ground, he should be severely reprimanded, and cautioned to be more careful in future. The Court does not deal with his certificate, as they were strongly inclined to do, chiefly on account of the detention that such action would have caused to the vessel.

(Signed) R. S. JOHNSTONE,
Stipendiary and Circuit Magistrate.

(Signed) FRED. J. LOBB,
Commander, R.N.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the
14th day of October, 1898.)