

(No. 6051.)

"ARGUS" AND "IOLANI."

FINDING and Order of a Naval Court, held at the British Consulate, at Portland, Oregon, on the 15th and 16th days of May, 1900, to investigate the circumstances attending a collision between the British sailing ship, "ARGUS," of Dundee, official No. 76176, and the Hawaiian sailing ship, "IOLANI," of Honolulu, on or about the 2nd day of May, 1900, whereby the loss of the said "IOLANI" ensued, and serious damage to the said "ARGUS" ensued, and to investigate the cause of such collision, and to enquire into the conduct of the master, certificated first mate, certificated second mate, certificated third mate, and crew of the said "ARGUS."

The "Argus" is an iron sailing vessel, ship-rigged, of 1,543 tons, registered tonnage, official No. 76176, built at Glasgow in 1878, and belonging to the port of Dundee.

It appears, from the evidence given before this Court, that she sailed from Port Los Angeles on the 21st day of April, A.D. 1900, bound for Portland, Oregon, with a part cargo of merchandise, and a crew of 26 hands all told. The "Iolani" was an iron sailing vessel, barque-rigged, of 1,178 tons, registered tonnage, sailing under the Hawaiian flag, and belonging to the port of Honolulu. She was formerly the British ship "Thurland Castle," built at Belfast in 1876.

It appears from the evidence that she sailed from the port of Hilo on or about the 15th day of April, bound for San Francisco, laden with a cargo of about 2,100 tons (of 2,000 lbs.) of sugar, and a crew of 15 hands all told, as well as four passengers.

It appears from the log book of the "Argus" that at noon of the 2nd May the vessel was in latitude 37° 38' N., longitude 139° 59' W. At 2.0 p.m. she had light winds from N.E., cloudy and overcast. At 4.0 p.m. they wore ship to N.E., and at 8.0 p.m. tacked to W.N.W.

From the evidence, it appears that at 10.0 p.m. the course of the "Argus" was N.W. by W. The weather was fine, with exception of fog showers. From 10.15 to 10.20 p.m. the "Argus" was close hauled on the starboard tack, heading about N.W. Her lights were burning brightly. About this time the look-out reported to James Galletly, the first mate, a light on the port bow, which proved to be the green light of the "Iolani," braced up on the port tack, but steering a course.

From the statement of John Hanson, second mate of the "Iolani," it appears he did not see the light of the "Argus" until 10.30 p.m., and when he discovered it he threw the vessel aback, and all evidence agrees that bells on both ships were, at this time, rung, and a flash-light burned on board the "Argus." The master of the "Argus" at the same time put his helm hard aport and brought his vessel up in the wind, but neither of the ships stayed, and the "Argus," having sternway struck

the "Iolani" with her rudder and stern about midships and at the cathead, the vessels then cleared. Considerable damage was done to the sternplates and frames of the "Argus." The masters of both vessels enquired whether they should stand by each other, but neither believed much damage was done. As nearly as can be ascertained from the evidence, the "Iolani" suddenly went down at about 11.50 p.m., just subsequent to the sending up of rockets, which were seen on board the "Argus," which wore ship and took aboard the crew and passengers from their boat, and brought them to Portland. The Court had not the advantage of the log book of the "Iolani," which was lost with the vessel, and the evidence on her side of the case is meagre. The Court, having regard to the circumstances above stated and having carefully considered the evidence, finds as follows:—

1. That Mr. John Hanson, second mate of the "Iolani," who was in charge of that vessel when the light of the "Argus" was seen, was in default, as he knew that the "Argus" had the right of way, and had he then taken prompt action, in the opinion of the Court, the collision would have been avoided.

2. That the Court is of the opinion that the look-out was bad on board the "Iolani," or the lights of the "Argus" would have been seen earlier.

3. That the master of the "Iolani" did all possible under the circumstances, after he came on deck, to avoid the collision.

4. That the master of the "Argus" appears to have navigated his vessel in a seamanlike and proper manner, and when a casualty was inevitable to have done everything in his power to avert the same.

5. That the suggestion that the helm of the "Argus" should have been put hard astarboard is, in the opinion of the Court, fallacious, as the effect of such a manoeuvre would probably have been to sink both ships.

6. That the Court sees no grounds for blaming the conduct of Mr. James Galletly, Mr. Francis Robert Cook, Mr. William D. Davidson, or any of the members of the crew of the "Argus," either before or after the casualty.

7. That the Court therefore sees no grounds for dealing with the certificates of the master or any of the officers of the "Argus."

The expenses of the Court, fixed at £11 18s. 9d., are approved.

Dated, at Portland, Oregon, this 16th day of May, 1900.

JAMES LAIDLAW,
President of Naval Court, H.B.M. Consul.

F. WICKHAM,
Master of the British ship,
"Dovenby Hall," of Liverpool.

JOHN A. TOYE,
Master of the British ship,
"Allerton," of Liverpool.

} Members.

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rocks unless absolutely certain of the ship's position, and under most favourable circumstances.

That the loss of the "Iranian" was due to over-estimating the strength of the current and its direction in the neighbourhood of the Redfield Rocks.

That owing to the speed of the vessel at the time of the accident the master's decision to instantly abandon her was amply justified.

That it was extremely unfortunate that the log and other ship's records were unavoidably lost, as their corroborative evidence would have been of considerable value.

The discipline appears to have been very good, and to have been maintained throughout.

The vessel was apparently well found, and in all respects seaworthy.

The death of William Smith, A.B., which must be presumed, is a question of great importance.

It appears that the responsibility rests entirely with the man himself, and yet the Court cannot but express its regret that more strenuous efforts were not made to save him from what must have appeared to them all as almost certain death.

The apparent lack of interest evinced by the fate of their missing shipmate can only be explained by imagining all present over-estimated the danger of remaining a little longer by the vessel.

Finally the Court decides that the certificate of the master will not be dealt with, but recommends that more cautious practice be pursued in future.

The Court is of opinion that the officers and crew are entirely free from all blame in connection with the loss of the vessel and cargo.

The mates certificates are accordingly returned.

The Court in pursuance of the powers vested in it by Section 483 of 57 and 58 Vict. c. 60, orders that the sum of £12 5s. 1d., being the costs of the proceedings before the said Court be paid by Andrew Watt, master, being one of the parties thereto, and he is hereby ordered to pay the said amount accordingly.

The expenses of the Court, fixed at £12 5s. 1d., are approved.

Dated at Yokohama this 25th day of April, 1900.

PHILIP NELSON WARD,
Lieutenant R.N., H.M.S. "Barfleur,"
President of Naval Court.

ERNEST MILES HOBART-HAMPDEN, British Vice-Consul at Yokohama.	} Members.
CHARLES HENRY STUART-TOCQUE, Master s.s. "Rohilla."	
WILLIAM SINCLAIR THOMPSON, Master s.s. "Argyll."	

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the
6th day of July, 1900.)