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STEWART, Judge.

BORNE, Assessors.

of Trade on the 1901.)

(No. 6214.)

"MOBILE" (S.S.).

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

In the matter of a formal investigation held at the Municipal Buildings, West Hartlepool, on the 20th and 21st days of June, 1901, before John Suggitt and Robert Lauder, Esquires, Justices of the Peace for the Borough of West Hartlepool, assisted by Captains Henry Needham Knox, R.N., and Edmund M. Hughes, into the circumstances attending the loss of the British steamship "Mobile," of West Hartlepool, which left Fort Morgan, U.S.A., on or about the 28th day of December, 1900, and has not since been heard of.

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 vessel left Fort Morgan on the 28th day of December, 1900, and discharged her pilot after crossing the bar the same day, and that she has not since been heard of.

The Court is of opinion that when the "Mobile" left Fort Morgan, as laden with her deck cargo, she was not in proper trim or seaworthy condition, and had not, therefore, sufficient stability to cross the Atlantic in winter; that she possibly encountered bad weather, and owing to her want of stability, probably foundered.

Dated this 22nd day of June, 1901.

J. SUGGITT, ROBT. LAUDER, Justices.

We concur in the above Report.

HENRY KNOX,
Captain R.N.,
E. M. HUGHES,

Annex to the Report.

This inquiry was held at the Municipal Buildings, West Hartlepool, on the 20th and 21st days of June, 1901, before John Suggitt and Robert Lauder, Esquires, two Justices of the Peace for the Borough of West Hartlepool, assisted by Captain Henry Needham Knox, R.N., and Captain Edmund Miller Hughes, as Assessors.

Mr. Burton, Solicitor, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, appeared for the Board of Trade, and Mr. Wallace, Solicitor,

Sunderland, for the owners.

The "Mobile," of West Hartlepool, official number 102,737, was a British screw steamer, built at Hartlepool, in the County of Durham, in the year 1895, by Messrs. Furness, Withy and Company, Limited, of West Hartlepool.

She was of the following dimensions:—length 340 feet, breadth 45 feet, and depth of hold 25.8 feet, her gross tonnage being 3341.22 tons, and her net registered tonnage 2183.18 tons. She was schooner rigged and was fitted with one inverted triple expansion engine of 300 horse power, with a speed of nine knots, on a loaded draft. Her engines were constructed by Messrs. T. Richardson and Sons, Limited, of Hartlepool, in 1895.

She was owned by the Horsley Line, Limited, of West Hartlepool, in the County of Durham, Mr. Matthew Henry Horsley being appointed Manager, as per advice under the Seal of the Horsley Line, Limited, dated the 15th December, 1899, and under the command of Mr. Thomas Wittingham, who held a master's certificate No. 015,173.

On the voyage in question she was well found and in good condition, and was fitted with life saving apparatus, according to the statute. She had four boats, of which two were lifeboats, hung in davits and resting on chocks.

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The "Mobile" arrived at Mobile, Alabama, U.S.A., on the 1st December, 1900, and commenced taking in a cargo of cotton in bales, cotton seed meal in bags, grain in bulk, lumber and timber. She completed her loading on the 24th December, and on the 27th December left Mobile in charge of Mr. Sidney A. Dorgan, pilot, for Fort Morgan in the lower bay, where she arrived the same afternoon with the assistance of the tug "Echo," Mr. Peter Forbes, master. On the 28th December she left Fort Morgan under the charge of Mr. Thomas A. Johnson, pilot, who, after taking her across the bar, left her, since which time nothing has been heard of her.

The only evidence submitted to the Court, with the exception of that of Mr. M. H. Horsley, Manager, and Mr. Woodward, representing Messrs. Furness, Withy and Company, Limited, was the depositions of Mr. R. K. Merrill, Surveyor of the Board of Underwriters, Mobile, Alabama, U.S.A., Mr. John Walsh, stevedore, Mobile, Mr. Wheeler, Lloyds' Agent, Mr. J. C. Strong, Secretary of the Mobile Coal Company, Mr. Sidney A. Dorgan and Mr. Thomas A. Johnson, pilots, and Mr. Peter Forbes, master of the tug "Echo." The last report from Mr. Thomas Wittingham, late master of the "Mobile," dated the 24th December, 1900, was also

According to the above depositions the cargo, of grain in bulk, cotton seed meal in bags, lumber, and cotton in bales, was properly stowed and secured in the hold, as well as the cotton in bales in the poop and bridge deck house, and the timber on deck. As to the quantity of timber on deck, Mr. M. Wheeler states in his deposition, that he acted "as agent for the owners," and he further states as follows:—"The Captain knew that the amount of deckload was left at his discretion. Had he wanted less he would have stopped taking in the timber, as he did, and if, in his discretion, he wanted more he would have ordered it. I had nothing to do with the amount further than agreeing with the shippers to take such deck load as the Captain might see fit to load." From the master's report he had 241 tons of coal on arrival at Mobile, at which place he took on board 85 tons, and subsequently at Fort Morgan a further quantity of 255 tons, which, after allowing 40 tons for steam winches and coming down the river to Fort Morgan, gives a total of 541 tons. The bunker capacity being 500 tons, there thus remained about 41 tons, which must have been stowed on deck. There appears also some discrepancy relative to the draft and freeboard of the "Mobile" on leaving Mobile. In the master's report he is stated to have had a mean draft of 22 feet 2 inches, with a freeboard of 6 feet 4 inches, while the deposition of Mr. Merrill, surveyor, gives the mean draft as 21 feet with a freeboard of 7 feet $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This draft is confirmed by the pilot, S. A. Dorgan, and the master of the tug "Echo." There is also some doubt whether the No. 2 ballast tank, capable of containing 218 tons, was full or empty. The Court is inclined to think that the No. 2 ballast tank was full on leaving Mobile, but was pumped out at Fort Morgan, when the 255 tons of coal were taken on board. When, however, the "Mobile" was over the bar and the pilot, Thomas A. Johnson, was leaving, he states in his deposition she was drawing 23 feet. The only way the Court can account for this statement is, that the master, finding his vessel tender owing to her deck load, filled both the main and forehold ballast tanks. There seems to be no doubt that at Fort Morgan the load line disc would be about level with the water, but if, when the pilot left after crossing the bar, the draft was 23 feet, it would be considerably submerged and thus there would be another element of danger should the vessel meet with bad weather.

The following is a list of the crew of the "Mobile":—
Thomas Wittingham, Master.
Robert Prentice, Mate.
Arthur James Williams, Second Mate.
William H. Tyrer, Third Mate.
W. C. Millart, Fireman.
John McNeil, Fireman.
S. S. Diggert, Steward.
William Bradshaw, A.B.
K. E. Koller, A.B.
J. H. Fraats, A.B.
James Thomas, A.B.

W. Anderson, A.B. John J. Corteen, A.B. Austin Berry, Chief Engineer. James Oliver, Second Engineer. Thomas Hornby, Third Engineer. H. J. Berry, Fourth Engineer. William Myler, Donkeyman. William Harrison, Fireman. Patrick McGrath, Fireman. George Kirkbride, Fireman. Arthur Sage, Engineer's Steward. Edward Pratt, Steward. J. Harrington, Fireman. A. Jobiasen, A.B.
Thomas Burke, Fireman.
On the conclusion of the evidence, Mr. Burton, on

behalf of the Board of Trade, submitted the following

questions for the opinion of the Court: (1.) Was the vessel, when she left Mobile, Alabama, on the 27th December, 1900, in good and seaworthy condition as regards hull and equipments, and was she

supplied with the boats and life saving appliances required by the statute? (2.) What was the number and rating of the vessel's

(3.) What cargo did the vessel carry, and was it pro-

perly stowed? (4.) Was the vessel overladen? What deck cargo did she carry? Was it too heavy for her; was the weight of it properly distributed and was it efficiently secured?

(5.) As laden had the vessel sufficient stability?
(6.) Was the vessel in proper trim and in seaworthy condition when she left Fort Morgan on the 28th December, 1900?

(7.) What, in the opinion of the Court, is the cause of the vessel not having been heard of since the pilot left her on the 28th December, 1900?

Mr. Wallace, having addressed the Court on behalf of the owners, and Mr. Burton having replied on behalf of the Board of Trade, the Court replied to the questions

as follows:—
(1.) The "Mobile," when she left Mobile, Alabama, on the 27th day of December, 1900, was in good and sea-worthy condition as regards hull and equipments, and she was supplied with the boats and life-saving appliances required by the statute.

(2.) Her crew was comprised of the master, three mates, four engineers, seven able seamen, seven firemen, one donkeyman, and three stewards, making a total of

twenty-six. (3.) Her cargo, according to the deposition of Mr. John Walsh, stevedore, of Mobile, and sworn to before

A. S. Benn, Esquire, British Vice-Consul at Mobile, consisted of 6,287 bales of cotton, 4,480 sacks of cotton seed meal, 25,820 bushels of grain in bulk, 2,400 wooden staves, 650,491 superficial feet of pitch pine and poplar timber, and 32,395 cubic feet of pitch pine timber, and was stowed, according to a rough drawing made by him, as follows: -On deck, between the forecastle and forepart of bridge deck and between the afterpart of bridge deck and poop, pitch pine timber; in the poop and bridge deck house, cotton in bales; in the hold in forepeak cotton in bales; in No. 1 hold cotton seed meal in bags at the bottom, on them lumber which consisted of planks, deals and boards from 1×6 to 4×12 , above them and up to the deck cotton in bales; in Nos. 2 and 3 holds, grain in bulk at the bottom, on it hold, lumber at the bottom and cotton in bales up to the deck. lumber and cotton in bales as in No. 1 hold; in No. 4

(4.) The Court is of opinion that, considering the draft and freeboard of the "Mobile," and the deadweight of the cargo, she was not overladen. She carried a deck cargo of pitch pine timber, the weight being estimated at about 700 tons, as well as the poop and bridge deck house being filled with bales of cotton.
This the Court considers being too heavy for her. The only evidence as to its being properly distributed and efficiently secured is the deposition of Mr. Walsh, stevedore at Mobile, Alabama, that it was 6 to 7 feet above the deck and was secured with stanchions, chains and wire lashings under the supervision of the master.

(5.) The Court is of opinion that when the "Mobile" left Fort Morgan, as laden with her deck cargo, she had not sufficient stability to cross the Atlantic in the winter months.

(6.) The Court considers that the "Mobile" was not in proper trim or seaworthy condition when she left Fort Morgan.

(7.) The "Mobile" possibly encountered bad weather, and owing to her heavy deck cargo affecting her stability, probably foundered.

J. SUGGITT, ROBT. LAUDER, Justices.

We concur.

HENRY KNOX, Captain R.N., Assessors. E. M. HUGHES,

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 16th day of July, 1901.)

"RAI

The Merchant

In the matter of a for Land Commission C the 30th and 31st days of August, 19 assisted by Captain SAMUEL BROOKS, in the loss of the Brit of Dublin, which le about the 2nd Octo heard of.

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The Court having car stances attending the ab finds for the reasons sta ship was lost by the per good and seaworthy co equipments and was p and trimmed when she day of October, 1900. evidence bearing upon any other conclusion having been heard of s

Dated this 2nd

We concur in the al

This inquiry was he Four Courts, Dublin police magistrate, ass Captain S. Brooks, na Mr. Keith Hallowe

and Hamilton), appe Mr. William Hayes, s The "Rathdown," was a British sailin

Workman, Clarke & She was ship-rigg following dimension 41.7 ft.; depth of h midships, 24.45 ft. 2,058.31.

She was owned others, Sir Richard Rogerson's Quay, I owner, advice under registered owners, classed 100 A1 at Ll all life-saving applia had four boats, two gig. The lifeboats between the main ar the forward deck-he was placed on skids fitted with every statute.

She had four co Thomson, a steeri spare compass, an These were all in a New York in March She had a forec

high; a poop deck 9774-180-8/19