

(No. 6261.)

"MANCHESTER."

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

IN the matter of a formal investigation held at the Magistrates' Room, Liverpool, on the 16th and 17th days of October, 1901, before W. J. STEWART, Esquire, assisted by Commander CABORNE, C.B., R.N.R., and Rear-Admiral BOYES, into the circumstances attending the supposed loss of the British ship "MANCHESTER," which left New York for Yokohama on August 21st, 1900, and has not been heard of since September 23rd, 1900.

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 evidence is not sufficient to enable any opinion to be formed as to the cause of the supposed loss of the said vessel.

Dated this 17th day of October, 1901.

W. J. STEWART, Judge.

We concur in the above Report.

W. F. CABORNE, } Assessors.
G. T. H. BOYES, }

Annex to the Report.

This inquiry was held in the Magistrates' Room, Dale Street, Liverpool, on the 16th and 17th days of October, 1901, when Mr. Paxton appeared on behalf of the Board of Trade, and Mr. Leslie Scott, instructed by Mr. Collins, represented the owners.

The "Manchester," official number 99,391, was a sailing ship, built of steel at Sunderland by Messrs. Wm. Doxford & Sons, Limited, in 1892, and was registered at the port of Liverpool, her registered tonnage being 2851.09 tons. Her length was 312.9 ft., her breadth 46.1 ft., and her depth of hold 25.8 ft. She had two decks and a collision bulkhead, was classed 100 A.1 at Lloyds, and was last surveyed at Antwerp, in May, 1900. She was a four-masted barque, and was owned by the Galgate Shipping Company, Limited, of 13, Tower Chambers, Old Churchyard, Liverpool. Mr. John Joyce, of the same address, being the manager, according to advice received June 13th, 1899.

On the 23rd August, 1900, she left New York bound for Shanghai, carrying a cargo consisting of 124,168 cases of oil and about 100 tons of stone ballast, and with a crew of 31 hands all told. Mr. Frank Clemens, who held a certificate of competency as master, number 01246, being the master. The vessel was in good order and well found, and carried boats and life-saving appliances in accordance with the statute.

The oil cases were what are commonly known in the trade as "lowtop," their dimensions being about 20 1/2 ins. by 15 ins. by 10 1/2 ins., and their weight being about 81 1/2 lbs. each. 87,145 cases were stowed in the lower hold, and 37,023 cases in the between decks, the total weight of the cargo equalling about 4515 tons. Room for about 1200 cases was left forward, on account of trim, and the vessel when loaded drew, according to the storage inspector at New York, 23 ft. forward, and 23 ft. 2 ins. aft. The density of the water where vessels load at Devo's Yard is said to permit of a vessel rising 1 1/2 ins. in sea water on a 25 ft. draught. The cases were stowed upright, that is, with the bungs on top, except in the lower hold, where a few were placed flat in order to make the cargo more secure. In addition to the cases of oil, there were 100 tons of stone ballast stowed in the limbers and on the ceiling from the pump well aft.

The deposition of James Brown, the New York pilot, who had charge of the "Manchester" when she proceeded to sea, states that the vessel drew 23 ft. of water, had plenty of freeboard, appeared to be in excellent condition and trim, and did not appear to be at all tender. When the pilot left her she was under three topsails, maintop gallant sail, and fore and aft sails, the weather being fine and the wind south-west. The British barque "Ellisland" left New York for Yokohama with a cargo of case oil on the same day that the "Manchester" sailed, and the two vessels were in company until August 26th, when the "Manchester" outsailed the "Ellisland." When the two ships parted company the "Manchester's" appearance and trim were quite satisfactory. On September 14th, the "Ellisland," then being in latitude 30° N. and longitude 33° W., encountered a hurricane which threw her on her beam ends, the top-masts were cut away in order to right her, and she put into the Azores. The "Manchester" was seen by the French steamer "Olbia," from Genoa for Buenos Ayres, whose captain states that he met her at 1 p.m. on September 23rd, 1900, a month after she left New York, in latitude 12° 18' N., and longitude 28° 54' W. (meridian of Paris). The wind was then light from the N.E., the "Manchester" was under full sail, she was sailing well, she was sufficiently ballasted, and made a very good impression. The "Manchester" signalled as follows:—"I come from New York, am bound to Japan (sic), please inform my owners all well on board." The statement made at Marseilles to the above effect, before H.B.M. Consul, by Captain A. F. Matter, of the "Olbia," is the last known information received respecting the missing vessel.

There appears to be no reason for doubting the "Manchester's" stability as laden.

Mr. Sherwood Forrest, who had been master of her from about June 22nd, 1897, to July 18th, 1900, states in his deposition that under his command she made a voyage from New York to Shanghai, between March 9th, 1899, and July 12th, 1899, with a cargo consisting of case oil, there being also 120 tons of stone ballast on board. (The quantity of ballast so stated is confirmed by documentary evidence supplied from the owners' office.) During this voyage the vessel encountered several severe gales, and in the China Seas she ran into a typhoon, when she was hove-to for 18 hours, her behaviour throughout being excellent, and the ship sustaining no damage. He also states that she was one of the best sea-boats he had ever commanded, taking on board very little water, and always behaving well.

Mr. Arthur Henry Haver, assistant manager of Messrs. Wm. Doxford & Sons, Limited, of Sunderland, the builders of the vessel, produced no curve of statical stability, and stated that the ship was not inclined after completion, and her metacentric height had not been ascertained. However, the vessel was built nearly on the same lines as the "Houresfeld," whose stability was known to be satisfactory. Since the "Manchester" had been missing, he had made a rough calculation as to her metacentric height, when laden with oil without ballast, and estimated that it would be 2.7 ft., approximately, which should give a good margin of stability.

Mr. John Joyce, in his evidence, stated with regard to the increase in the number of cases of oil carried by the "Manchester," and the reduction in her ballast-points, to which his attention was drawn by the Court, that the oil cases are now made of a harder and heavier description of wood than they formerly were, which enables more to be carried than previously, and that the reduction in the amount of ballast did not endanger the stability of the ship. He added, that such oil cargoes might be carried without any ballast. In noting this latter statement, it is to be remarked that when ships are practically filled up with oil, as was the case in this instance, the question of ballast necessitates previous careful consideration of their stability.

In the absence of all information regarding the "Manchester," subsequent to her being spoken by the "Olbia," the Court is unable to form an opinion as to the cause of her disappearance.

At the conclusion of the evidence, Mr. Paxton, for the Board of Trade, submitted the following questions for the opinion of the Court:—

(1) Was the "Manchester" in good and seaworthy condition as regards hull and equipments when she left

New York on or about the 21st August, 1900, and was she supplied with the boats and life-saving appliances required by the statute?

(2) Was she properly and sufficiently manned?

(3) Was the cargo properly stowed and secured?

(4) What quantity of ballast had she on board? Where was it placed, and was it sufficient?

(5) Had the vessel the freeboard required by the statute?

(6) Whether as laden the vessel had sufficient stability?

(7) What, in the opinion of the Court, is the cause of the vessel not having been heard of since she was spoken by the French steamer "Olbia," on the 23rd September, 1900, on a voyage from New York to Shanghai?

(8) What was the value of the vessel and her freight, and for what amount were they respectively insured?

The Court returned the following answers to the questions of the Board of Trade:—

(1) The "Manchester" appears to have been in good and seaworthy condition as regards hull and equipments when she left New York, on or about the 21st August, 1900, and was supplied with the boats and life saving appliances required by the statute.

(2) The ship appears to have had a proper complement of officers, but there is no record on the copy of the articles that the chief mate, an American who joined at New York, held any certificate. In numbers and ratings the crew appear to have been equal to those shipped on previous voyages, but in a letter written by the master to the agent at New York, on August 23rd, the day of sailing, he said:—"I have a poor crew, but all are on board that signed articles."

(3) The cargo was properly stowed and secured.

(4) The evidence as to the quantity of ballast on board is conflicting. According to the depositions of the stevedore at New York, the agent of the Standard Oil Company, and the stowage inspector of the New York Produce Exchange, the amount on board was 160 tons of stone. On the other hand, the receipted bill of the New York Stevedoring Company states that the amount of stone ballast supplied and stowed was 100 tons.

The Court is of opinion that 100 tons is correct, as on the previous voyage the ship, when loaded down to her marks with a similar cargo, is described as having had on board 120 tons of ballast, whilst she carried 542 cases of oil less than on the present occasion.

The 542 additional cases carried on this voyage correspond in weight to the 20 tons less ballast. The ballast was stowed in the limbers and on the ceiling, from the pump well aft.

As regards the sufficiency of the ballast, there is evidence that since 1897, the ballast with oil cargoes has been reduced from about 172 tons to about 100 tons, and an additional number of cases, amounting in this instance to 2305 cases, has been carried. The ship, however, with but 20 tons more ballast, made the previous voyage from New York to Shanghai in safety, and, failing evidence to the contrary, it is to be assumed that the amount carried upon the present voyage was sufficient.

(5) The vessel had the freeboard required by the statute.

(6) There is no evidence to show that the stability of the vessel upon this occasion was insufficient, and, judging by her previous performances, together with the fact that she was sighted by the French steamer "Olbia" on the

23rd September, 1900, a month after her departure from New York, proceeding favourably under all sail, after known bad weather had occurred in the vicinity of her course during the interval, the Court is of opinion that the stability may be taken as having been sufficient.

(7) In the absence of any further evidence the Court is unable to form any opinion as to the cause of the vessel not having been heard of subsequently to September 23rd, 1900.

(8) The vessel was valued in the policy of insurance at £23,000, and was insured for £19,400, of which the owners took £3,100. The freight was £6,596, and was insured for £5,500.

The following is a list of the officers and crew of the missing ship:—

Names.	Rank.	Nationality.	Age.
Frank Clemens ...	Master ...	British ...	44
W. R. Cole ...	Mate ...	American ...	46
Edward Thompson ...	2nd Mate ...	British ...	22
M. Muira ...	Steward ...	Japanese ...	48
C. Oluso ...	Cook ...	Japanese ...	24
O. Tobiussen ...	Carpenter ...	Norwegian ...	33
A. Bramsen ...	Boatswain ...	Norwegian ...	29
Carl Iversen ...	{ Boatswain's Mate }	{ Norwegian ... }	37
Charles Johnson ...	Sailmaker ...	American ...	33
W. Feronins ...	A.B. ...	Finnish ...	40
A. Fensuchl ...	A.B. ...	Norwegian ...	22
B. Kundsén ...	A.B. ...	Norwegian ...	18
C. W. Svensen ...	A.B. ...	Swedish ...	18
M. Mortensen ...	A.B. ...	Danish ...	32
Karl Lindberg ...	A.B. ...	Finnish ...	40
Jens Olsen ...	A.B. ...	Norwegian ...	23
Thomas Lawrence ...	A.B. ...	British ...	45
Joseph Edwill ...	A.B. ...	British ...	33
John Monelli ...	A.B. ...	British ...	29
P. Hallett ...	A.B. ...	British ...	22
P. Reviol ...	A.B. ...	German ...	29
Peter Rasmussen ...	A.B. ...	Danish ...	19
M. O. Ellaisén ...	A.B. ...	Norwegian ...	26
Jos' Vera ...	A.B. ...	Chilian ...	30
John Nelson ...	A.B. ...	Norwegian ...	27
G. Christensen ...	A.B. ...	Danish ...	22
Joe Schroeder ...	O.S. ...	Danish ...	24
V. Olsson ...	O.S. ...	Swedish ...	17
K. Henrikson ...	Donkeyman ...	Norwegian ...	24
R. W. Pease ...	Boy ...	American ...	16
James Ernest Tattersall }	Apprentice ...	British ...	19

(Indentured 29th June, 1897.)

W. J. STEWART,
Judge.

We concur in the above Report.

W. F. CABORNE, }
G. T. H. BOYES, } Assessors.

Liverpool, 19th October, 1901.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the
5th day of November, 1901.)

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Nationality.	Age.
British ...	44
American ...	46
British ...	22
Japanese ...	48
Japanese ...	24
Norwegian ...	33
Norwegian ...	29
Norwegian ...	37
American ...	33
Finnish ...	40
Norwegian ...	22
Norwegian ...	18
Swedish ...	18
Danish ...	32
Finnish ...	40
Norwegian ...	23
British ...	45
British ...	33
British ...	29
British ...	22
German ...	29
Danish ...	19
Norwegian ...	26
Chilian ...	30
Norwegian ...	27
Danish ...	22
Danish ...	24
Swedish ...	17
Norwegian ...	24
American ...	16
British ...	19

J. STEWART,
Judge.

NE, } Assessors.
YES, }

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INQUIRIES before INSPECTORS

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UNITED KINGDOM.

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