

(No. 6123.)

“NEWFIELD” (S.S.).

REPORT of a formal investigation, held in the Vice-Admiralty Court, Halifax, N.S., on the 4th, 5th, and 8th days of October, 1900, before W. H. SMITH, R.N.R., Wreck Commissioner, assisted by BLOOMFIELD DOUGLAS, R.N.R., Naval Assistant to the Marine Department, and Captain S. R. HILL, Government Steamboat Inspector, Nautical Assessors, into the cause of the stranding and total loss of the Dominion Government steamer “NEWFIELD,” at White Cove, Digby Co., N.S., on the 22nd of September, 1900, and adjourned to take evidence at Little River on the 9th of October, and further adjourned to Halifax for the 12th of November, on which day the hearing of the case was concluded in the presence of the Court as above constituted.

Report and Decision of Court.

The Court, having very carefully enquired into all the circumstances in connection with the stranding and total loss of the Dominion Government steamer “Newfield,” at White Cove, on the 22nd day of September, 1900, and taken into consideration the somewhat conflicting evidence adduced, finds the following facts:—

1st. That during the morning of the 22nd of September, and up to the time of the stranding of the “Newfield,” the weather was foggy, but with intervals of clearness and haziness.

2nd. That neither the deep sea nor hand leads were used on the passage from Westport up to the time the ship struck upon the ledge at White Cove, which neglect was unjustifiable and contrary to the usual practice of seamen, and in direct disobedience to Article 6 of the Instructions to Masters of Government Vessels.

Deep water soundings could have been obtained with Lord Kelvin’s patent sounding apparatus, which was on board, but not placed in position ready for use, and it would not have been necessary to stop the ship for that purpose. With the ordinary deep sea lead-line, soundings should still have been taken, and the vessel’s head turned to seaward, and the engines stopped to perform that duty. No excuse, therefore, can be brought forward for the neglect to use the lead upon this occasion.

Soundings could also have been found with the hand lead when the ship was close in shore at Whale Cove, at Tommy Cove, and at White Cove, where she struck and was lost.

No satisfactory explanation is given to the Court by Captain Campbell or Chief Officer J. U. Blakeney why this essential duty was neglected.

3rd. That land was observed close aboard by several witnesses on various occasions before the ship struck, and, from the evidence obtained from fishermen and others examined at Little River on the 9th of October, it is proved beyond doubt that the steamer “Newfield” was close in shore, and in sight of those witnesses, some of whom were at Whale Cove, 2½ miles from Boar’s Head, and at Tommy Cove, 1¼ miles further on, where the ship had a narrow escape from disaster by running close to the edge of a reef, and that after making a distance of 1 mile further the vessel was finally stranded on the eastern side of White Cove.

4th. From the evidence given by Captain Campbell, it appears he only saw the loom of the land before the ship struck the rocks at White Cove.

The Court, having due regard to Captain Campbell’s previous successful career in the service of the Dominion Government, can only come to the conclusion that upon this particular occasion he either absolutely neglected his duty and lost the ship by his own default, or that his eyesight failed him at a critical time, and that the state of his health was so impaired by illness and the anxiety he felt in reference to the collision of the “Newfield,” under his command, with the “Rathlin Head” in July last, that on the 22nd of September the said Captain Campbell was neither mentally nor physically in a fit and proper state to navigate the steamer. The Court

incline to this opinion, having due regard to Captain Campbell’s previous career in the service of the Dominion Government.

The Court, after very carefully reviewing the evidence, and taking the admission of Chief Officer J. U. Blakeney that his commanding officer, Captain Campbell, was suffering from illness, which he had stated to him early in the morning, has come to the conclusion that no excuse can be found for the culpable and extraordinary supineness evinced by Mr. J. U. Blakeney in regard to the navigation of the ship during his watch on the occasion of the disaster.

The Court is of opinion that had Mr. Blakeney performed his whole duty, and remained on the bridge under the circumstances which existed, he would have had proper regard to matters within the sphere of his observation, and assisted the captain in correcting his error, and by so doing it is probable the loss of the “Newfield” would have been averted.

Although Mr. John Callaghan, second officer, was not on watch from noon up to the time of the disaster, he was for a portion of the time on deck in a position to see that the ship was too close in shore, and was not navigated with due care and caution.

He also knew that Captain Campbell was afflicted with illness, and his conduct to his superior officer was as disloyal as that of the chief officer, Mr. J. U. Blakeney.

The decision of the Court is therefore as follows:—

(A.) That Captain John Campbell was not in a condition to safely navigate the Dominion Government steamship “Newfield” on the 22nd of September, the date of stranding, and should not have undertaken the responsibility, but as he did assume it, and the ship was lost while he was personally navigating her, he is hereby found in default.

The Court therefore cancels his Imperial certificate of competency, No. 84537, as master ordinary, with a recommendation to the Honourable the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, and the Imperial Board of Trade, that the same be returned to him after a period of six months from the date of the stranding of the vessel on his producing satisfactory medical certificate that his eyesight and health are such as to enable him to duly perform the duties of a master of a sea-going ship in the Merchant Service, and also satisfy the Board of Examiners of Masters and Mates, and the officers composing this Court, that he is again fit to be in possession of a certificate.

(B.) That the chief officer, Mr. J. U. Blakeney, was also in default for the before-mentioned reason, and that he is hereby severely censured, and his certificate of competency suspended for three calendar months from this date.

(C.) That the second officer, Mr. John Callaghan, was likewise in default for the reason before stated, and that he is hereby reprimanded, and his certificate of competency suspended for one month from this date.

W. H. SMITH, R.N.R.,

Commissioner.

We fully concur in the above decision.

BLOOMFIELD DOUGLAS, R.N.R.,
Naval Assistant, Marine and Fisheries Department,
S. R. HILL,
Dominion Steamboat Inspector, } Nautical Assessors.

Given in open Court at Halifax, N.S., this 13th day of November, 1900.

Annex to Report.

The “Newfield” was the property of the Dominion Government.

She was built of iron at Sunderland in 1871. Official number 65037; length, 206 feet; breadth, 29 feet; and depth, 16 feet 8 inches. Tonnage, net, 509; gross, 735.

The vessel was propelled by compound surface condensing engines of 100 nominal horse power, working up to 560. The pressure on the boilers was 60 lbs., and the number of revolutions at full speed 69.

She appears to have been well supplied with boats, anchors and chains, &c., for the performance of the work she was engaged in.

There were three compasses on board—a standard compass aft, of Lord Kelvin's pattern, and a steering compass in the wheel-house upon the bridge, also a compass in the after wheel-house.

The captain states the compasses were in good order, and he knew the deviation upon the various points, and applied them upon each change of course.

There was also a patent deep-sea sounding apparatus of Lord Kelvin's pattern supplied to the ship.

The vessel was generally employed in the lighthouse and buoy service for the Nova Scotia Agency, but occasionally performed cable work in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The captain was in possession of an Imperial certificate of competency, foreign-going, No. 84537, as master ordinary; the first officer a Canadian sea-going certificate of competency as master ordinary, and the second officer held a master's Canadian certificate of competency for the coasting trade.

Upon her last voyage the "Newfield" left Halifax on the 15th of September, calling at Mahone Bay and Woods Harbour, and at 5.30 p.m. of the 19th anchored at Pubnico Harbour. At noon of the 20th the anchor was weighed, and she proceeded to St. Mary's Bay, and supplied the various lighthouses in that district, those for Boar's Head having been landed at Tiverton to be forwarded by road.

At 3 p.m. on the 21st the vessel anchored at Westport in the Grand Passage, and landed supplies for Bryer Island and Peter's Island.

The fog being very thick the first part of the forenoon of the 22nd, the steamer remained at Westport until 11.20 a.m., when she left and proceeded towards Digby, the Superintendent of Lights having received orders by telegram to go to that place and transfer the remaining portion of supplies to the "Lansdowne," and send the ship back to Halifax as soon as possible to take on board submarine cable for the Strait of Belle Isle.

Shortly after leaving the engines were set on full speed of about 8½ knots per hour, the course being N.E. ½ N. Magnetic.

The patent log was streamed at about 11.30, and the second mate, Callaghan, was on the bridge with the captain.

At noon the north end of Bryer Island bore S.W. ½ W., four miles distant, fog being observed to seaward.

The first officer relieved the second mate on the bridge, and Jennex and Bushen, two quarter masters, also came on watch at that time, a man being stationed upon the look-out on the cable bridge.

At 0.40 p.m. Boar's Head Lighthouse was abeam, and the captain stated the fog began to close in upon the land.

The patent log showed 10½ miles for the run since starting, with five per cent. of slip to be deducted.

No four-point bearing of the lighthouse was taken, but Captain Campbell informed the Court that he took a vertical angle of the lighthouse with his sextant, which placed the ship about 1¼ miles off shore, but the deep-sea lead was not used to verify the position at the time.

He was personally superintending the navigation of the ship himself, and after passing Boar's Head altered the course to N.E. by E. by standard compass—N.E. ½ E. magnetic, and he maintained that course for 30 minutes, the speed of the ship being the same.

He lost sight of the land about 10 minutes after passing Boar's Head, as at that time the fog shut in very thick, and continued so with occasional slight intervals of a clearance, although the vision was not very much increased.

The captain estimated the ship was going over the ground about 4½ knots per hour, which statement he afterwards corrected when he had inspected the chart, considering that as the tide would have been 2 knots an hour against the ship she must have been going more than 4½ knots.

He also states that after the fog set in dense he did not see the land until a little before the ship struck, but that he noticed the loom of the land as seen through the mist and fog. It was on the starboard hand a little before the beam in the direction of the ship's head, and he calculated it was from 1 mile to 1½ miles off at that time.

Soundings were not taken at any time, and the captain gave as his reason for not using the lead that the tide was strong ebb, and it would have been difficult to have found bottom, and only a short time before a departure had been taken from Boar's Head.

The captain states that about five minutes before the casualty occurred the first officer left the bridge to perform some duties upon the deck, and he was left alone.

The evidence given by the captain shows that shortly after one o'clock the land came suddenly in sight on the starboard bow, and he ordered the quartermaster to starboard the helm one point, but immediately after, perhaps not more than one and-a-half minutes, breakers were reported by the look-out man in a direction nearly ahead of the ship, which the captain then saw himself, and gave the order to put the helm hard-a-starboard, which order he had to repeat twice, it not having been heard the first time by the quartermaster.

The vessel answered her helm, the course being altered to seaward two or three points, which would have brought the ship's head to about N.E. by N. ½ N., or N.N.E.; but immediately after she ran upon a submerged reef, going full speed. The fore hold filled with water as the steamer grated heavily upon the rocks.

The telegraph bell was rung to stop the engines, but before the engineer had time to obey the instructions it was rung ahead again full speed.

The orders appear to have been nearly simultaneous. The engines were therefore not stopped before the vessel went upon the rocks, and the speed of the ship was not reduced.

The distance from the position the captain gave the ship off Boar's Head to where she stranded is 5½ miles, which shows the tide did not retard her progress.

As the vessel went upon the rocks at full speed she must have immediately ripped a large hole in her bottom.

The captain kept the engines going ahead for a minute or two, but seeing she was firmly fixed upon the rocks and the tide ebbing, he stopped the engines, and no attempt was made to float her afterwards, as he was under the impression that no buoyancy remained in the hull after the contact, and she might have foundered in deep water had she gone off.

The water ebbed and flowed in the fore hold at each returning tide.

At low water a large hole was observed in the port bilge, and at high water the upper deck forward was completely covered.

Finding there was no hope of saving the ship, arrangements were made for the crew to save their effects.

The weather was fine with little wind, and the water smooth. Although it is stated by the captain that the N.E. by E. course was maintained after passing Boar's Head until a minute or two before the casualty, there is strong evidence to show that about 10 or 15 minutes after the time it was said that the lighthouse was abeam, the ship was actually close in shore on the western side of Digby Neck, heading towards the western horn of Whale Cove, distant from Boar's Head Lighthouse less than 2½ miles. This appears to have been about the time it was said the dense fog set in.

She was seen by several fishermen who resided there, one of whom, James Bunker, described the steamer as having been steering about that time in a direction east of the bay, according to diagram A. Bunker had been 15 years at sea, and knew the points of the compass.

He states that his boy fired a gun at a rat, and soon after the ship sheered off shore and headed along the coast to about N.E., intimating that the noise of the report of the gun had been heard on board.

This witness also stated that the vessel had two masts, and he saw an iron wheel projecting over the bow, used for cable purposes, and he thought it was the "Lansdowne," the Government steamer employed by the New Brunswick Agency.

He did not hear the fog whistle of the ship. On the following Monday morning he saw a steamer on the rocks at White Cove. He took a look at her, and was quite positive it was the same vessel he had seen approaching Whale Cove.

J. W. Tidd, proprietor of a fishing establishment at Whale Cove, who employs eight men in connection therewith, stated in his evidence that Whale Cove is about half a mile deep and half a mile across the entrance.

He recollected Saturday, the 22nd of September. He states that he saw the "Newfield" about 1 p.m., and it was after he and the men had taken their dinners. The fog was thick.

The men called his attention to a steamer coming from the westward from the opposite side of the Cove.

He looked from the door of the store and saw the steamer. He saw her plainly. He saw her funnel, and her whole length from bow to stern.

He noticed the basket of his family it was the "Lansdowne."

He also noticed a man and thought the wheel was buoys.

He stated she seemed to be 7 or 8 knots.

She was pretty close to over 150 yards.

He judged she was the first saw her, and then

He thought she was only. He did not hear any vessel, either before or seen her.

It occurred to him "Lansdowne," and the said to himself this is White

He says had she kept the would have gone on shore passed very close to the could not see how she escaped

This witness stated that the 28th of September, White Cove, and that she opinion she was the same of Saturday, the 22nd.

He was sure he did not time he first saw her unthought the absence of the trary to law, and as he could they could see the land suddenly off from the shore

After passing clear of Cove, the steamer's course appears her head was directed in towards and Cove, not more than 1½

There she was observed employed with oxen, care of whom, C. W. Denton, to those on board as she

The evidence given by the steamer after he came from towards one o'clock in from the westward, head

He saw the vessel plainly appeared to be quite a fine

He noticed the steam from the funnel, and he

The vessel was about going smartly along.

She appeared to be there was a bar running water, and the steamer two hours ebb, there was

He also stated that the N.E. by N. course, and the wake of the ship, a pipes alongside.

He heard no fog whistle time she was passing, or

Denton was working Monday, the 24th, at White it was the same steamer the Saturday previous.

After clearing the rocks must have been direct and again pointed in shore another small bay called from the shore with struck upon a reef as the eastern side of the

As her head was N. been well into the bay

The statements of measure corroborated crew who were on board

Chesley Young, who quarter past twelve to the land about a quarter

It looked like a person reported it to the office

He heard the captain helmsman, and he saw

helm to starboard, and off and put the land

is her head was direct

He noticed the basket or wheel upon the bow, and told his family it was the "Lansdowne."

He also noticed a man near the large wheel at the bow, and thought the wheel was for laying and taking up buoys.

He stated she seemed to be going a fair gait, perhaps 7 or 8 knots.

She was pretty close to the shore; he did not think over 150 yards.

He judged she was steering an E. by N. course when he first saw her, and then she sheered off to about N.E.

He thought she was only in sight for about five minutes. He did not hear any fog whistle sounding from the vessel, either before or at the time, or after he had seen her.

It occurred to him that it might have been the "Lansdowne," and the captain having made the coast said to himself this is Whale Cove, and then kept off.

He says had she kept the course he first saw her on she would have gone on shore, and he thought she must have passed very close to the western horn of the bay, and he could not see how she escaped from going on shore.

This witness stated that he saw the steamer on Friday, the 28th of September, when she was on the rocks at White Cove, and that she was the "Newfield," and in his opinion she was the same steamer he saw on the morning of Saturday, the 22nd.

He was sure he did not hear the fog whistle from the time he first saw her until he lost sight of her, and he thought the absence of the sound of the whistle was contrary to law, and as he could see the ship he also thought they could see the land from the ship, and she circled suddenly off from the shore.

After passing clear of the wharf and rocks at Whale Cove, the steamer's course being changed to seaward, it appears her head was again, by some unexplained cause, directed in towards another small bay called Tommy's Cove, not more than 1½ miles from Whale Cove.

There she was observed by two fishermen who were employed with oxen, carting fish up from the shore, one of whom, C. W. Denton, held up his hands and shouted to those on board as she was running right into the bay.

The evidence given by this witness was that he saw the steamer after he came from dinner, and it was then well on towards one o'clock in the afternoon. She was coming from the westward, heading about east by compass.

He saw the vessel plainly, and the men on deck. There appeared to be quite a few.

He noticed the steam from the pipes and the smoke from the funnel, and he saw a big wheel on the bow.

The vessel was about 100 yards from the shore, and was going smartly along.

She appeared to be in a dangerous position, because there was a bar running to the N.W. which dries at low water, and the steamer crossed that bar where at the time, two hours ebb, there was only 15 feet of water over it.

He also stated that the ship circled off shore to about a N.E. by N. course, and he distinctly saw white water in the wake of the ship, and the water coming out of her pipes alongside.

He heard no fog whistle blown from the ship at the time she was passing, or before or after she passed.

Denton was working on board the "Newfield" on Monday, the 24th, at White Cove, and he was quite sure it was the same steamer he had seen off Tommy's Cove the Saturday previous.

After clearing the reefs near Tommy's Cove her bow must have been directed to seaward for a few minutes and again pointed in shore towards the western horn of another small bay called White Cove, and in turning out from the shore with helm hard-a-starboard she finally struck upon a reef as before mentioned, close to land on the eastern side of the cove, and became a total wreck.

As her head was N.N.E. at the time she must have been well into the bay before her course was changed.

The statements of these men living on shore is in a measure corroborated by some of the members of the crew who were on board the ship.

Chesley Young, who was on the look-out from a quarter past twelve to one o'clock p.m., said that he saw the land about a quarter to one.

It looked like a point with breakers on it, and he reported it to the officer on the bridge.

He heard the captain sing out "starboard" to the helmsman, and he saw the man at the wheel put the helm to starboard, and he noticed the ship's head move off and put the land further on the starboard bow; that is her head was directed away from the coast.

After the reef was cleared the helm was steadied. He thinks the ship was about two hundred yards from the breakers, and the first officer, Mr. Blakeney, was on the bridge at the time the breakers were seen.

Josiah Bushen, quartermaster, states that at 12.15 he went to the helm, and at that time he saw the land on the starboard beam of the ship. It appeared to be pretty high.

While he was there he could sometimes see the land and again it was obscured by fog.

He saw the land occasionally and the rocky shore and the water breaking upon it, and during the latter part of his trick at the wheel he ported a quarter of a point and starboarded a quarter of a point by the captain's orders.

Mr. J. U. Blakeney, first officer, states that he thought that about ten or twelve minutes after 0.40, at which time Boar's Head was abeam, he heard the captain give the order to starboard the helm.

He saw the man at the wheel pointing to something as indicating it on the starboard bow.

The helm was starboarded for a few minutes. He did not hear the captain tell the man at the wheel to resume his course.

John Callaghan, second officer, says he came up on deck about ten minutes to one.

The weather was then thick with fog, and no land was in sight.

About one o'clock there appeared to be a loom of the land at the water's edge nearly half a mile off on the starboard side, and he saw the vessel's head sheer off on the starboard helm.

He noticed by the wake that the ship had gone off two or three points—may be more.

He remained on deck walking about as he had no more duties to perform, and did not notice the ship had been brought back to her original course.

Ten or twelve minutes after that he felt the ship strike. At the time the ship struck he did not see the land, but he looked for it.

Charles E. Stewart, chief engineer, says he observed the land they were passing about ten or fifteen minutes before the vessel struck.

He was on the main deck, and thought he had a better chance of seeing the land than those on the bridge.

He noticed the ship's bow going off to port before she struck, and also at the time land was sighted on the previous occasion.

He saw some breakers about a quarter or half an hour before the ship struck.

The vessel was then about one hundred yards from the breakers. The first time he saw them her head was going off.

He says at the time he saw the fog lifting, so that he could see the wash of the water on the shore, the first officer was standing near him.

Herbert Johnson, acting boatswain, says he did not hear the captain's orders to starboard the helm, but saw the ship's head moving to port, but cannot say exactly how many points she went off; but he did not hear the look-out man Chesley Young report breakers ahead, and he further said that he did not know anything about the navigation of the ship before she struck.

He was on deck then, and he did not think that anybody could have seen the land or houses on shore as the fog was very thick.

Thomas Martin, quartermaster, says he was getting his dinner between twelve and one, and came on deck about a quarter to one, and did not see the land at any time from a quarter to one and before the ship struck, but he was in the boatswain's locker when the casualty occurred.

P. Jennex, quartermaster, says he did not see the land any time between twelve and one, and was at the wheel when the ship struck, and when he got instructions to steer a N.E. by E. course he steered it all the time until he was ordered to starboard the helm.

These being the statements of the several witnesses, according to the evidence, it is necessary that, as the casualty occurred while Captain Campbell was in personal charge of the navigation of the ship, it remained for him to show that it was not caused by negligence on his part.

The repeated warnings he had of the ship's approach towards danger shortly after taking a departure from a position off Boar's Head, which he claims to have been correct, when it is shown she was first heading in for Whale Cove, 2½ miles from Boar's Head, and shortly after for Tommy Cove, 1½ miles further along the coast, should have led him to shape the course of the ship further out to sea, as the whole width of the Bay of Fundy was in that direction.

If the fog had kept up he could then have steamed along the coast at a safe and proper distance by the aid of the deep sea lead, and afterwards hauled in for Prim Point lighthouse and fog alarm, approaching cautiously or remained outside until the weather cleared.

No vigilance or care should have been wanting on his part to avert danger, and every known precaution ought to have been taken by himself and officers for the safe navigation of the vessel under the conditions which existed.

Instead of this course being adopted, it appears that a careless and reckless navigation was followed, which has seldom come under the knowledge of the members of this Court.

In sight of the facts it is impossible to comprehend the reasons for such reckless and negligent navigation.

Either Captain Campbell's eyesight failed him at a critical time, or he became suddenly afflicted by temporary aberration of mind, caused by previous illness, as it was found that immediately after the casualty he was so prostrated by sickness as to be incapable of taking any active part in the duties which were necessary, and he took shelter in a house on shore, where he remained until the following Tuesday morning.

Unless the erratic movements of the ship can be accounted for in some reasonable manner, it is difficult to understand how she could have been placed so frequently in peril by going in and out of the various indentations of the coast, apparently without reference to the courses she was making, which it cannot be said were correctly known.

Captain Campbell contented himself by estimating the ship's distance from the coast by occasionally observing what he called the loom of the land, which is a most indefinite expression.

The knowledge a mariner can have of the proximity of a ship to the land by using his eye alone, when its loom only is observed, is absolutely uncertain, entirely depending upon the condition of the atmosphere with regard to the amount of fog hanging about the land and its density.

When the loom of the land first came into sight it was necessary that some precautionary measures to verify the ship's position should have been used.

In this case the principal method was to have taken a cast of the deep sea lead, and it would have been prudent had the officer in charge turned the ship's head to seaward.

The latter course seems to have been adopted once or twice, but her head was directed in towards the land again in some uncertain manner.

Had correct soundings been taken and the error been applied to the cast for the height of tide at the time, it would no doubt have corrected the erroneous impression the captain had formed of his distance off the shore, and the casualty might not have occurred.

The navigation of the vessel was therefore most incautious and imprudent.

The defence principally brought forward by the learned counsel for the captain was as to the deflection of the vessel from her course after passing Boar's Head, in consequence of an abnormal strength of the tide upon that day, her speed having been retarded by the force of the ebb tide running towards the entrance of Petite Passage.

Captain Campbell was in possession of the sailing directions for the S.E. coast of Nova Scotia and Bay of Fundy, and he should have made himself acquainted with the possibility of the strength and set of the tide being increased under exceptional circumstances in that locality, and consequently made extra allowance for it if the density of the fog warranted him in doing so for safety of navigation.

By inspecting the chart he could also have seen that the flood and ebb tides run nearly parallel to the coast.

No doubt when a vessel is very close to the inner or eastern point of Boar's Head she may be affected by the movement of the surface water, either ebb or flood, which is produced there at any particular time of tide. It is the duty of an officer in charge of the navigation of a vessel to understand and apply it.

From the position of the ship, assumed by the captain, of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles off Boar's Head at 0.40 p.m., the tide should have had no influence whatever to set the steamer towards the entrance to Petite Passage.

Afterwards, upon the course it was stated she was steering, N.E. by E., the tide must have been nearly in the opposite direction, namely, S.W. by W., and would only have had a tendency to retard the vessel's progress.

It is, however, proved beyond doubt by the evidence that the ship actually made $5\frac{1}{2}$ knots over the ground in from 35 to 40 minutes after passing Boar's Head up to the time she struck upon the rocks at White-Cove, which gives a rate of $8\frac{1}{2}$ knots per hour for her speed.

If the ship was only 30 minutes in doing this, as at first stated, it would have been more.

As the "Newfield" was proceeding at a rate of speed of only $8\frac{1}{2}$ knots per hour through the water by the patent log, it can be seen that the tide could have had no appreciable effect upon her whatever, as she made her full distance.

It having been shown by the evidence that the ship was actually running close to the shore for a considerable part of the time occupied in running the distance from Boar's Head, she would probably have been steaming along where no tide was felt, and it would have been merely noticed by decrease in the depth, as it was stated that after the stranding no tide was perceptible.

The time entered in the scrap log book, when the breakers were last seen, is 1.10 p.m., and a few minutes after she struck the rocks.

This was posted in the regular log book, but has since been changed to 1.20 p.m. after it had been inspected by the Commissioner. This is a most serious offence.

The chief officer and the chief engineer give the time as 1.10, the second officer as 1.10 or 1.12, the third engineer, who was on watch, as about 1.15 p.m. or 1.20 p.m.

In such cases it is difficult to determine the exact time, but assuming that it was 1.20 p.m. then 40 minutes had elapsed after it was stated the vessel had passed Boar's Head; she therefore made a speed at the rate of $8\cdot25$ knots per hour.

Captain Campbell used his own watch, the others took the time by various clocks, and it does not appear that they were compared with each other, therefore little reliance can be placed upon the actual time the casualty occurred, probably within a period of five or ten minutes.

According to the evidence given by Captain Campbell it was very foggy shortly after passing Boar's Head up to the time the ship went ashore.

Some of the other witnesses also described the weather in a similar manner.

Had this been the case it was necessary that Article 16 of the Act respecting the Navigation of Canadian waters should have been followed, which provides that "every vessel shall, in a fog, mist, falling snow, or heavy rain-storms, go at a moderate speed, having careful regard to the existing circumstances and conditions."

The "Newfield" was proceeding at full speed of $8\frac{1}{2}$ knots per hour, and this was kept up until she had been stranded upon the rocks.

No rate of speed has been established by law to define what constitutes a moderate speed, and the members of Marine Courts, held to investigate shipping casualties, are entirely guided by the circumstances of each case, as it is necessary to take into consideration, not only the risk the vessel runs herself, but the danger of coming into collision with other ships, and when close in shore to the possibility of small fishing craft and other vessels being about.

The practice of proceeding full speed in foggy weather with steamships when running along our coast generally brings severe condemnation from the members of all Marine Courts of Inquiry, and the disapproval of experienced mariners.

In spite of the frequent and repeated warnings we are accustomed to hear of, the reprehensible practice does not appear to be diminishing, and most of the shipping casualties which have been under investigation in this country can be traced to this vicious system, together with the neglect of the use of the deep sea lead.

It is time that officers of ships should realise that a large number of such disasters may be prevented if the ordinary precautions for safe navigation are adopted.

After the ship was stranded the captain, being prostrated with sickness, left her and took up his abode in a house near the shore, and the officers and crew commenced saving the cargo, composed of lighthouse supplies, after they had landed their own effects.

On Sunday morning, the 23rd of September, the Government steamer "Lansdowne," which had been lying at Digby all day Saturday, came to their assistance, and Captain Bissett sent a portion of his crew to give all the aid they could to the shipwrecked people.

A large portion of the supplies was sent on board the "Lansdowne," but some of the goods were destroyed by water.

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At 8 W. H. S. ordered the hull charge district.

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Captain assistant and too steamer resuming

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The "Newfield" remained upon the rocks in an upright position until 5 a.m. of Tuesday, the 25th, when she broke in two abreast of the bridge, but the forward part did not separate from the after part for several days after.

At 8 o'clock on Tuesday morning, the 25th, Captain W. H. Smith reached the scene of the wreck, and at once ordered a survey upon her, the result of which was that the hull, cargo, and all appertaining to her was placed in charge of Mr. Bowers, Receiver of Wrecks for that district.

She was duly advertised for sale, and ultimately sold for the benefit of the Government.

Captain Bissett, of the "Lansdowne," gave much assistance upon this occasion, both with men and boats, and took on board the supplies which were saved. His steamer went to Petite Passage for shelter every night, resuming her work at an early hour each morning.

On Tuesday, the 25th, the whole of the officers and crew of the "Newfield" were taken on board the "Lansdowne," and she proceeded to Halifax, where she arrived on the 27th.

Mr. C. A. Hutchins, Superintendent of Lights, telegraphed to the agent at Halifax that he had assumed charge (Telegram No. 4), and did all he could for the best interests of the department.

He also made several visits to the village of Little River and conducted the telegraphic communications.

W. H. SMITH, R.N.R.,
Commissioner.

We fully concur in the above.

BLOOMFIELD DOUGLAS, R.N.R.,
Naval Assistant, Marine and
Fisheries Department.

S. R. HILL,
Dominion Steamboat Inspector.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the
4th day of January, 1901.)