

(S. 186.)

"MABEL" (S.S.).

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

In the matter of a formal investigation held at the Magistrate's Room, Liverpool, on the 28th and 29th days of October, 1902, before W. J. STEWART, Esquire, assisted by Captain E. M. HUGHES, Commander CABORNE, C.B., R.N.R., and Alderman TOOZES, J.P., into the circumstances attending the stranding of the British s.s. "MABEL," of Liverpool, in Knockinelder Bay, co. Down, Ireland, on 9th October, 1902.

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 stranding of and damage to the said vessel were occasioned by the default of the master, Mr. Alfred Mann, whose certificate, numbered 993, the Court suspends for a period of six months from the date hereof.

Dated this 29th day of October, 1902.

W. J. STEWART, Judge.

We concur in the above Report.

E. M. HUGHES, W. F. CABORNE, H. TOOZES, } Assessors.

Annex to the Report.

This inquiry was held respectively in the Municipal Buildings and the Magistrate's Room, Dale Street, Liverpool, on the 28th and 29th days of October, 1902, when Mr. Paxton appeared on behalf of the Board of Trade, and the master and mate appeared in person but were not legally represented.

The "Mabel" is a British screw steamship, built of steel, at Selby, by the Selby Shipbuilding and Engineering Company, Limited, in 1902. Her official number is 115,285; she is fitted with one triple expansion inverted direct-acting condensing engine of 76 nominal horse power; has one steel boiler pressed to 180 lbs.; has an estimated speed of 10 knots; is 204.67 tons gross register and 54.07 tons net register; her length is 115 ft., breadth 21.5 ft., and depth 11 ft.; and she is owned by the steam trawler "Mabel," Limited, of the north-west corner of Canning Dock, Liverpool; Mr. Robert Harley, of 74, Bedford Street, Liverpool, being designated the manager, under advice received 6th June, 1902.

The "Mabel" left Liverpool about 3 p.m. on the 8th October, 1902, for the North Minch fishing grounds, with a crew of 10 hands all told, and under the command of Mr. Alfred Mann, who held a certificate as skipper, No. 993, her draught of water being 7 ft. forward and 13 ft. aft.

The Bar Light vessel was passed at 5.15 p.m., a course N.W. nothing to the westward, which was said to be correct magnetic, was set, and the vessel proceeded at full speed, equal to about 10 knots, the tide being about one-third ebb. The weather was hazy, there was a light S.E. breeze, and the sea was moderate.

Shortly after leaving the Bar Light vessel, the master went below, leaving the mate in charge, and giving instructions to steer the course already set, and to call him at 11 p.m. if the Chickens Light were not previously seen.

From 6 p.m. until midnight the boatswain was in charge of the watch.

There was some conflict of evidence as to when the master was actually called, the Chickens Light not having been seen, but the point is immaterial, as the master went on deck at midnight, at which hour the mate's watch commenced.

At this time, the weather was much about the same, nothing was visible, the log recorded 64 miles, and the master altered the course to north, equal to N. 1/4 E. magnetic, he being under the impression that the Chickens Light then bore about N.E. some 6 or 7 miles distant. At 12.30 a.m. on the 9th, the course was again altered to N. 1/4 E. equal to N. 1/2 E. magnetic.

At 2 a.m. the master went below, leaving orders that he was to be called if no lights were seen by 5 o'clock. About 2.50 a.m., the mate called the master and reported that he could see a light bearing about E.N.E. which he thought must be the Mull of Galloway, there being other lights, which he took to be those of a steamer, ahead.

The master went on deck, and at once came to the conclusion that it was not the Mull of Galloway, but before he could verify what it really was, the ship went ashore on rocks within a few yards of the mainland, and it was then discovered that the lights seen ahead were those of a house. At the time of stranding the weather remained much as before, and it was said that lights could be seen at a distance of 3 or 4 miles. After consultation, an attempt was made to work the engines astern, but owing to the vicinity of the rocks they were immediately stopped again, and an attempt was then made to lay out an anchor. It was found that the vessel had stranded in Knockinelder Bay, County Down. The "Mabel" remained ashore for 38 hours, and then was floated with the assistance of a steam tug, and taken into Strangford Lough.

Temporary repairs to her rudder having been effected, she left for Liverpool the same day, under her own steam, escorted by a tug, and, upon arrival, was placed in dry dock, when serious damage was discovered. It should be noted that the "Mabel" was supplied with charts, but the master stated that he had not consulted them.

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

- (1) What number of compasses had the vessel, were they in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel, and when and by whom were they last adjusted?
(2) Did the master ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observation from time to time, were the errors correctly ascertained and the proper corrections to the courses applied?
(3) Was the patent log with which the vessel was supplied, efficient and in good working order?
(4) Was a safe and proper course set at or about 5.15 p.m. of the 8th October last, and was due and proper allowance made for tide and currents?
(5) Were safe and proper alterations made in the course at or about midnight of the 8-9th inst. and 12.30 a.m. of the latter date, and was due and proper allowance made for tide and currents?
(6) Were proper measures taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel from time to time, and especially after midnight on the 8-9th inst.?
(7) Having regard to the state of the weather on the morning of the 9th inst., was the vessel navigated at too great a rate of speed?
(8) What was the light seen shortly before 3 a.m. of the 9th inst.; were prompt and proper measures then taken for the safety of the vessel?
(9) Was a good and proper look out kept?
(10) Was the lead used, and if not ought it to have been used, especially after the failure to pick up the Chickens Light?
(11) What was the cause of the casualty, and was the "Mabel" seriously damaged thereby?
(12) Was the vessel navigated with proper and seaman like care?
(13) Was serious damage to the s.s. "Mabel" caused by the wrongful act or default of the master and mate or of either of them?

The Court gave judgment as above, and returned the following answers to the questions of the Board of Trade:—

(1) The "Mabel" had three compasses, namely, one fitted into the top of the wheelhouse, by which the courses were set and steered, and another placed in front of the wheel, the third being a spare one. They were in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel, and were adjusted when the vessel was new, some 18 weeks previous to the casualty, but by whom did not appear in the evidence.

(2) The master did not ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observation from time to time, and no deviation cards were produced to the Court.

(3) The patent log with which the vessel was supplied appears to have been efficient and in good working order.

(4) A safe and proper course was set at or about 5.15 p.m. of the 8th October last, but no allowance was made for tide and currents, the master estimating that one tide would neutralize the other.

(5) The master having failed to verify his position, safe and proper alterations were not made in the course at or about midnight of the 8-9th inst., and 12.30 a.m. of the latter date, and no allowance was made for tide or currents.

(6) Proper measures were not taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel from time to time, and especially after midnight of the 8-9th inst.

(7) Having regard to the state of the weather on the morning of the 9th inst., and looking at the fact that the Chickens Light had not been sighted, and that no other means had been taken to verify her position, the vessel was navigated at too great a rate of speed.

(8) The light seen shortly before 3 a.m. of the 9th inst. was the South Rock; before the master had time to verify its character, the vessel stranded.

(9) A good and proper look out was kept.

(10) The lead was not used, and it ought to have been used, especially after the failure to pick up the Chickens Light.

(11) The cause of the casualty was the careless navigation of the master, and the "Mabel" was seriously damaged thereby.

(12) The vessel was not navigated with proper and seamanlike care.

(13) Serious damage to the s.s. "Mabel" was caused by the default of the master, whose certificate the Court suspends for six months.

Upon the application of the master, the Court agreed to recommend the Board of Trade to grant him a certificate as mate during the term of his suspension.

W. J. STEWART,

Judge.

We concur in the above Report.

E. M. HUGHES,
W. F. CARBORNE, } Assessors.
H. TOOZES,

Liverpool, Oct. 29th, 1902.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 21st day of November, 1902.)

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