

(No. 6536.)

“MANCHESTER MARKET” (S.S.).

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

IN the matter of a formal investigation, held at the City Sessions Court, Manchester, on the 19th, 20th, and 21st days of May, 1903, before FRANCIS JOHN HEADLAM, Esq., Stipendiary Magistrate for the City of Manchester, assisted by Captains E. M. HUGHES and W. H. SINCLAIR-LOUITT, into the circumstances attending the stranding of the steamship “MANCHESTER MARKET” on the Tuskar Rocks, Wexford, Ireland.

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 and loss of the “Manchester Market” were due to the careless navigation of her by her master, Mr. Martin Hikins, and contributed to by the default of the 2nd officer, Mr. Richard Jackman Sowden, in failing to reduce the speed of the vessel, in a thick fog, and by his neglect in not calling the master on hearing the fog signal from the Tuskar Lighthouse. The Court therefore suspends the certificate numbered 99171 of the master, Mr. Martin Hikins, for a period of nine months from the date hereof, and also suspends the certificate numbered 029466 of the 2nd officer, Mr. Richard Jackman Sowden, for a period of three months from the date hereof.

Dated this 21st day of May, 1903.

FRANCIS J. HEADLAM,  
Judge.

We concur in the above Report.

E. M. HUGHES,  
W. H. SINCLAIR-LOUITT, } Assessors.

Annex to the Report.

In the matter of a formal investigation, held at the Sessions Court, Minshull Street, on the 19th, 20th, and 21st days of May, 1903, before Francis J. Headlam, Esq., Stipendiary Magistrate, assisted by Captain E. M. Hughes and W. H. Sinclair-Louitt, into the circumstances attending the stranding and loss of the British steamship “Manchester Market” on Tuskar Rocks, St. George’s Channel.

This inquiry was held at the Sessions Court, Minshull Street, Manchester, on the 19th, 20th, and 21st days of May, 1903, when Mr. Galloway appeared for the Board of Trade, Mr. Miller for the master, and Mr. Furniss for the owners. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd officers were not represented, and appeared in person.

The “Manchester Market,” official number 113115, was a British screw steamship, registered at the port of Manchester, and built of steel by Messrs. Furness, Withy, & Co., of Hartlepool, in the year 1902. Her dimensions as per register were:—Length 360 ft. 6 ins., breadth 48 ft. 2 ins., and depth in hold from tonnage

deck to ceiling amidships 28 ft. 2 ins. She was fitted with three triple expansion direct-acting surface condensing inverted engines of 374 nominal horse-power and of 1,750 effective, and at the time of her loss, which forms the subject of this inquiry, was the property of the Manchester Liners Company, Limited, Robert Burdon Stoker, of 13, St. Ann Street, Manchester, being the duly appointed manager, 1st February, 1902. Her gross tonnage was 4090.73 tons, and after deducting 1440.44 tons for engine room and crew space, her registered tonnage was 2650.29 tons. She had three compasses, one of which was a Lord Kelvin’s Standard, by which the vessel was navigated. She was supplied with the necessary charts and sailing directions, and had the requisite boats and life-saving appliances in accordance with the Act. She was in good order and well found in every respect. The “Manchester Market” left Manchester on the 24th day of April last, bound for Philadelphia, with 2,700 tons of general cargo, her draught of water being 19.8 aft and 18.7 forward. She had a crew of 40 hands all told, six of whom were cattle men, no passengers, and was under the command of Mr. Martin Hikins, who held a certificate of competency as master numbered 99171. She proceeded all well, and at 10.45 p.m. on the 25th April last the pilot was discharged off the Bar Lightship and a course set west by north. On passing the Skerries Light at about 2.30 a.m., the 2nd officer left the bridge to call the master, as he knew the course required altering. He asserts positively that although he went into the chart-room and called the master more than once and shook him, he failed to rouse him from his deep sleep or obtain any reply. The 2nd officer then laid off a course on the chart to pass the Tuskar Lighthouse on his own responsibility and changed the course to S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  W. by standard compass. At 3.45 the South Stack Light was passed at an estimated distance of five miles, the weather at the time being described as rainy, but clear. On the chief officer taking charge of the deck at 4 a.m., the 2nd officer asserts that he informed him of his attempt to rouse the captain at 3.45 a.m. being unsuccessful, and that he had of his own initiative altered the course to S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  W., at the same time asking the chief officer to check or verify that course on the chart as soon as he could leave the bridge with safety. At 5 a.m. on the 26th April, saw the chart and consulted the master as to altering the course, as he thought that it should be altered. The master said “all right,” and the chief officer altered course to S.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W., the weather at the time being rainy but clear, the vessel going at full speed, and making about 10 to 10  $\frac{1}{2}$  knots per hour by patent log. From this time to 11 a.m. the above course of S.W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  W. was steered, there being a light S.E. breeze with passing showers, the log indicating a speed of 11 knots per hour. At 11 a.m., Blackwater Light vessel bore N.W. 6 to 7 miles distant by rough estimate only, and at 11.50 Lucifer Light vessel bore N.W., the distance from it in this case also being roughly estimated by the master to be 3 or 4 miles, and by the officer of the watch in the log book to be 2 miles when the course was altered to S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  W., which course was continued up to the time of the vessel stranding on the Tuskar Rocks. At noon on the 26th April, as the 2nd officer was passing the master on his way to take charge of the deck, the master said “We have passed the Lucifer Light vessel and we ought to see Tuskar soon,” the master then being in the act of coming down from the bridge where he did not return till immediately before the vessel stranded. The 2nd officer states that on his taking charge of the deck he found the weather to be rather hazy with a light S.E. wind, the vessel going full speed ahead on a S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  W. course which he duly steered as instructed. Soon after he took charge of the deck the weather became more hazy, and at about 12.15 p.m. he heard what he took to be the report of a revolver shot, or of a door slamming. He left the look-out bridge for the purpose of enquiring what the noise was, and returned after an absence of two minutes; failing to discover it he asked the man at the wheel (John O’Brien) what he thought of it. O’Brien replied that he thought it was the report of a gun. The 2nd officer replied that it might be a door slamming. O’Brien

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replied he didn't think so, and was then told by the 2nd officer to listen for the report again. At this time the vessel had run into a thick fog bank, and just before doing so the second officer saw what he thought was a steamer's smoke on the port bow. On using the glasses, he could make nothing of it—he returned to the fore part of the bridge and immediately afterwards saw the Tuskar Rocks Lighthouse loom up in the fog about 2 points on the port bow less than a mile off. The helm was immediately ordered hard-a-starboard and the engine-room telegraph rang to full speed astern; both orders were promptly executed, but before the vessel could clear the rocks she struck heavily, glancing over one ledge and finally remaining fast on Gipsy Rock close to the Tuskar Lighthouse, from whence all endeavours to remove her proved unavailing; the collision compartment, Nos. 1 and 2, holes filling with water, in spite of all efforts made by the pumps to keep it under. After communicating with the lighthouse, 27 members of the crew landed there during the evening of the 26th, and others left in the Wexford lifeboat on the morning of the 27th April, the remainder of the crew and master finally leaving in the saloon steamer "Rainger" on the morning of Wednesday, 29th April, the vessel then having become a total wreck.

In reviewing the circumstances which induced this casualty, as disclosed by the evidence, the Court is impressed by the want of discipline which prevailed on board the "Manchester Market," and by the haphazard and careless manner in which she was navigated.

Both the Blackwater and Lucifer Light vessels were sighted, although by the course shaped they should not have been, and from neither was the distance of the vessel ascertained by the change of bearing or otherwise, it was merely roughly guessed at. Again, the second officer changed the vessel's course several points, taken off the Skerries, on his own responsibility, and without any orders from the master to do so, as he asserts that he was unable to rouse the master from his sleep, who should then have been on deck.

These were the facts of the case, and at the conclusion of the evidence Mr. Galloway, for the Board of Trade, submitted the following questions for the opinion of the Court:—

#### Questions.

- (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 course applied?
- (3) Were proper measures taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about 11 a.m. of the 26th April last? Was a safe and proper course thereafter steered, and was due and proper allowance made for tide and currents?
- (4) Were proper measures taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about 11.50 a.m. of the 26th April last? Was a safe and proper alteration then made in the course, and was due and proper allowance made for tide and currents?
- (5) Did the master give proper and sufficient instructions to the officer of the watch before going below at or about noon of the 26th April?
- (6) What was the sound heard by the second officer shortly after noon of the 26th April? Was he justified in taking it for a revolver shot or a door slamming? Should he have reported it to the master?
- (7) Having regard to the state of the weather after noon, was the vessel navigated at too great a rate of speed?
- (8) When the Tuskar Lighthouse and Rock were first sighted on the port bow were prompt and proper measures taken to keep the vessel out of danger?
- (9) Was a good and proper lookout kept?
- (10) What was the cause of the stranding and loss of the vessel?
- (11) Was the vessel navigated with proper and seamanlike care?

(12) Was the loss of the s.s. "Manchester Market" caused by the wrongful act or default of the master, chief, second, and third officers, or of any of them?

Mr. Miller having addressed the Court on behalf of the master, Mr. Furness having called on the managing director of the Manchester Liners Company, Limited, to speak as to the instructions issued by him as to discipline to his commanders and officers, and Mr. Galloway having replied for the Board of Trade.

The Court gave judgment as above, and returned the following answers to the questions submitted by the Board of Trade.

#### Answers to Questions.

- (1) The "Manchester Market" had three compasses, viz., a Standard compass, by Lord Kelvin, on the upper bridge, by which the vessel was steered and navigated, one in the wheelhouse amidships, and one in the after wheelhouse. They were in good order and sufficient for the safe navigation of the vessel. They were last adjusted in February, 1903, by Messrs. John Bruce & Sons, Liverpool.
- (2) The master states that he did ascertain the deviation of his compasses by observations from time to time and correctly applied the errors, but as the compass observation book was not produced at the inquiry the Court is unable to verify this statement.
- (3) At about 11 a.m. of the 26th April last the vessel passed the Blackwater Bank Light Ship at a roughly estimated distance of six to seven miles. Proper measures were not then taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel. A safe and proper course was not thereafter steered, and no allowance was made for tide and currents.
- (4) No measures were taken to ascertain and verify the position of the vessel at or about 11.50 a.m. of the 26th April last. A slight alteration of  $\frac{1}{4}$  pt. was then made in the course in the right direction but not sufficient in amount. The fact of having sighted the Blackwater and Lucifer Light vessels, the latter being passed three to four miles off by the master's estimate and by the evidence of the deck log book at a distance of two miles, was in itself sufficient warning that the vessel was considerably inside her line of course and therefore running into danger. No allowance was made for tide and currents.
- (5) The master did not give sufficient instructions to the officer of the watch before going below, or at about noon of the 26th April.
- (6) Shortly after noon of the 26th April the second officer, whilst on watch and during the presence of a haze, heard a report, which was undoubtedly the fog signal from the Tuskar Lighthouse. He was not justified under the circumstances in taking it to be a revolver shot, or a door slamming, and should have at once reported it to the master.
- (7) The weather at noon of the 26th April last was hazy and shortly afterwards became more so, the vessel then running into a fogbank. She was navigated at too great a rate of speed.
- (8) Considering the position of the Tuskar Lighthouse when first sighted close to and broad on the vessel's port bow, prompt and proper measures were taken to keep the vessel out of danger, the engines were immediately reversed to full speed astern and the helm was put to hard-a-starboard, but these measures were powerless to avoid the danger owing to the close proximity of the rocks and lighthouse.
- (9) A good and proper look-out was not kept.
- (10) The causes of the stranding and loss of the vessel were the steering of an unsafe course in thick weather to pass the Tuskar Lighthouse, the maintenance of a too high rate of speed in a fog and the absence of a proper and sufficient look-out whereby she struck the Tuskar rocks and became a total loss.
- (11) The vessel was not navigated with proper and seamanlike care.
- (12) The loss of the s.s. "Manchester Market" was caused by the default of her master, Mr. Martin Hikins,

in steering an unsafe course and by his absence from the weather, it was contributed to by the second officer, Mr. Ricard J. the vessel's speed in a fog, not calling the master when the Tuskar Lighthouse. It was an act or default of the chief

The Court on the application recommends that his request for

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The Court on behalf of the Company, Limited, to discipline Mr. Galloway having

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in steering an unsafe course to pass Tuskar Lighthouse, and by his absence from the deck in thick and foggy weather, it was contributed to by the default of the second-officer, Mr. Ricard Jackman Sowden, in not reducing the vessel's speed in a fog, and by his neglect of duty in not calling the master when he heard the fog signal from Tuskar Lighthouse. It was not caused by the wrongful act or default of the chief or third officers.

The Court on the application of the master recommends that his request for a certificate as first mate

during the period of his suspension as master should be granted.

FRANCIS J. HEADLAM,  
Judge.

We concur.

E. M. HUGHES,  
W. H. SINCLAIR-LOUITT, } Assessors.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 16th day of June, 1903.)