

(No. 6520.).

“LANGTON GRANGE” (S.S.)

REPORT of the Court of Inquiry held at Durban, Natal, into the circumstances connected with the grounding of the s.s. “LANGTON GRANGE” on the South Breakwater, on the 16th December, 1902.

The evidence before the Court shows that the s.s. “Langton Grange,” No. 105803, of 3795 nett tonnage, Charles S. Crichton, master, arrived at the outer anchorage from Buenos Ayres, on the 11th December, with a cargo of live stock and frozen meat, her draught being 19·3 ft. forward and 19·6 ft. aft.

At 5 a.m. on the 16th December she weighed anchor, and while under weigh was boarded by second pilot Jones in order to bring her inside, there was then sufficient water on the bar, it being two hours after ebb-tide, which was at 4.47. The weather conditions were favourable, the wind being from the S.W., though there had been a heavy swell outside the day before.

All went well until the steamer had crossed the bar and was almost between the piers, when the ebb tide caught her on the port bow, canting her head to the N. At the same time a heavy roller struck her on the port quarter and the set of the ebb tide on the starboard bow swung her towards the south pier.

The vessel was at this time going at full speed ahead. The captain thinks she was going about 7½ knots, but the pilot says about 6 knots. Finding that she would not come straight with the helm hard-a-port, the pilot reversed the engines, and, as he says, she had lost her way when she struck the south pier end on, and was damaged to the extent of starting 6 frames and her water-tight bulk head, damaging the landing of two keel plates and starting rivets. This caused her to make water.

Finding of the Court.

That the state of the weather was favourable for entering the harbour.

That the steering gear and engines were, in good-working order.

That the grounding was due to the swell catching the ship on the port quarter, thus canting her head to port, and the ebb tide striking her on the starboard bow at the same time, caused her to refuse to answer her port helm.

That in our opinion it is possible that if the steamer had been going faster through the water, she might have answered the helm.

That the pilot in charge appears to have done all that he could to avert a casualty.

(Signed) W. BROOME,
President.

3rd January, 1903.

(Signed) W. HEWETSON, }
Commander, R.N., } Assessors.
(Signed) E. H. HOWELL, }
Lieut. R.N. }

Certified a true copy.

H. E. GRANT,
Secretary Court of Inquiry.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the
24th day of April, 1903.)