

(No. 6587.)

“MERSEY” (S.S.).

IN the matter of the formal investigation held at the Admiralty Court, Court House, Quebec, P.Q., on the 26th, 27th, and 28th August, 1903, before Captain R. SALMON, Wreck Commissioner, assisted by Captain JOHN TEMPLE and Pilot F. X. LAMARRE, Assessors, into the causes which led to the foundering of the steam tug “MERSEY,” near Point Outarde, River St. Lawrence, on or about Wednesday, the 12th August, 1903.

Report of Court.

The Court, having carefully inquired into the circumstances attending the above-mentioned shipping casualty, finds:—

- (1) That the “Mersey” was in a seaworthy condition—so far as the evidence adduced went to show—when she left Quebec.
- (2) That the boat supplied to her was sufficient, had the master used the material at his disposal to increase its buoyancy, to have saved all the souls on board.
- (3) That the evidence was insufficient to prove what caused the casualty, whereby loss of life ensued.
- (4) That the master made no effort to stop the leak and save the vessel.
- (5) In the opinion of the Court, the vessel might have been kept afloat for an indefinite time if proper steps had been taken.
- (6) That the vessel was prematurely abandoned by the only experienced men on board.
- (7) That Gagnon, the master, was guilty of a brutal and inhuman crime in seizing the only boat

and deserting his vessel, leaving to drown five landsmen who were helpless to save themselves.

(8) That Barras, the mate, was guilty of an act of disgraceful cowardice in being a party to the desertion.

(9) That Lamothe, the engineer, was guilty of being accessory to the desertion, but, in the opinion of the Court, less to blame than his accomplices owing to his age and infirmities.

(10) The Court cancels the certificate of Gagnon, the master.

(11) Owing to the fact that a “Statement of the Case” was not furnished to Barras, the mate, before the commencement of the proceedings, the Court is unable to deal with his certificate, but will recommend the Honourable the Minister of Marine and Fisheries to deal with it summarily, under Section 20, of Chapter 35, of the Statutes of 1901, being “An Act respecting Inquiries and Investigations into Shipping Casualties.”

(12) The following are the names of the missing men:—

- Thomas Bisonette,
- Eugene Grenier,
- Joseph Barette,
- Emmanuel Gagnon, } bodies recovered.
- Joseph Martel,

The Court desires to express its sympathy with the relatives of the missing men.

(Signed) R. SALMON,
Commissioner.

We concur.

- (Signed) J. TEMPLE,
- Master Mariner.
- F. X. LAMARRE, } Assessors,
- Pilot.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the 20th day of October, 1903.)