

(No. 6665.)

## "RUBI SEDDON" (S.S.).

Shipping and Seamen's Act, 1877.

Wrecks and Casualties.

(For Stipendiary Magistrates and Justices of the Peace.)

Colony of  
New Zealand, } REPORT on a Shipping Casualty to  
to wit. } the "RUBI SEDDON."

To the Honourable the Minister having charge of  
the Marine Department of New Zealand.

I, the undersigned, Stipendiary Magistrate, and one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the Colony of New Zealand, having been on the 4th day of December, 1903, applied to by David Johnston, Esquire, Collector of Customs at the Port of Wellington, for a formal investigation, pursuant to section 240 of "The Shipping and Seamen's Act, 1877," and other provisions of the said Act, respecting a shipping casualty to a certain British ship called the "Rubi Seddon," of the Port of Glasgow, on the 23rd day of September last, in the Gulf of Suez, did duly proceed with the said investigation, to wit, on the 10th, 12th, and 14th days of December instant, and had before me, and examined on oath, divers persons and witnesses, to wit:— Alexander Duncan, master of the s.s. "Rubi Seddon," Henry Alexander McGregor, engineer surveyor, Marine Department, John Maclachlan Boyd, chief officer s.s. "Rubi Seddon," William Ferguson, A.B., Frederick William Blakey, chief engineer, Peter McKenzie, third engineer, Thomas McNab, fireman, Donald McEwan, A.B., Alexander Duncan, recalled, John Cochran, A.B., Henry Trestrail, A.B., Donald McCormack, A.B., Alexander Duncan, recalled, the original depositions of whose evidence are hereunto annexed,\* signed by me, being assisted therein by Collin Francis Post, master mariner, holding a certificate of competency, No. 478, New Zealand, who was duly appointed by me to act as assessor; and, upon such investigation and examination of witnesses as aforesaid, I find and report as follows, that is to say:—

(1) That an official number is not given to the said ship called the "Rubi Seddon," of which Alexander Duncan is master, who holds a certificate of competency, No. 017362, issued by the Board of Trade (foreign service), and which ship belonged to Messrs. Simons & Co., Ltd., of Renfrew. She has been brought out for delivery to Westport Harbour Board.

(2) That the loss or damage herein more particularly mentioned happened on the 23rd day of September, 1903, at about 10.30 o'clock in the evening, in the Gulf of Suez.

(3) That the damage appears by the evidence to have been caused by the ship stranding in the Gulf of Suez.

(4) That the nature of the damage done was to plates of the ship's bottom. That the vessel was insured, but amount and office are not known. That the "Rubi Seddon" is cutter-rigged; her port of registry Glasgow; her registered tonnage 348.70. That no lives were lost through the casualty.

And I, the said Stipendiary Magistrate, further state my opinion on the matter aforesaid to be as follows:—

That about 6.50 p.m. of the 23rd September, when abeam of Newport light, which is just outside Suez, the master shaped a course South 4 East, which should have taken him three miles outside of Zafarana lighthouse. When the wheel was relieved at 7 p.m. the man who took it admitted in his evidence that he made a mistake, and steered South 4 West, which had a tendency to bring the vessel 1½ miles to the Westward of the course before the error was discovered at 8 p.m., when the man at the wheel passed his course on to the next. The master then made an alteration in the course to the Eastward to what he considered sufficient to bring the ship back to her original course. It is evident that this allowance was not enough, and in my opinion this was due to the fact that the ship was going through the water faster than the master and the chief engineer had calculated. The increased speed was probably caused by a following wind, assisted by the action of currents which are there occasionally very strong, although their set and direction is unknown. The evidence goes to show that, although the night was clear, the land on each side was high, and the coast line not discernible. The evidence of all the witnesses shows that the master was more careful and attentive to his duties than is generally required of a master, and was never more than three hours absent from the bridge on any one occasion on the voyage out. It is also clear that he received little or no assistance from his chief officer. The manner in which the master extricated the vessel from a dangerous position, and brought her to New Zealand, after the mishap, is worthy of commendation. In my opinion, the accident was due to bad steering by the man at wheel, assisted by the action of cross currents. While not holding the captain responsible for the accident, I think he committed an error of judgment in leaving the deck so long before he had opened out the Zafarana light. The certificates of the master and the chief officer will be returned, but the master will be ordered to pay £15 15s. towards the cost of the inquiry.

Given under my hand this 14th day of December, 1903, at Wellington, New Zealand.

(Signed) A. McARTHUR, S.M.

I concur in the above report.

(Signed) C. F. POST,

Assessor.

A true copy.

GEORGE ALLPORT,  
Secretary Marine Department, N.Z.

(Issued in London by the Board of Trade on the  
3rd day of May, 1904.)

\* Not printed.